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A
COMMENTARY

ON THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

BY LUCIUS R. PAIGE.

VOLUME V.

FIRST AND SECOND
EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Search the Scriptures. — *John v. 39.*

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PREFACE.

THIS volume was written more than six years ago. The disturbed state of the country and the high price of labor and materials for printing have hitherto hindered its publication. I regret both the delay and the cause of it.

As the most important doctrines revealed in the New Testament have already passed under review, the Commentary on the shorter Epistles may be more brief. It is my intention to compress the remainder into one volume, which is now partly written, and which I hope may be published during the next year.

If it shall please God to prolong my life and to grant me ability to complete this work, I shall rejoice in the belief that I have not been altogether "barren nor unfruitful" in promulgating among men "the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" and of his blessed gospel.

For the approbation bestowed on the preceding volumes, I am truly grateful; and I cherish a hope that the present volume may receive a like generous and friendly greeting.

LUCIUS R. PAIGE.

CAMBRIDGE, MAY, 1867.

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the

CHAPTER I.

1. *Paul*. As in his epistle to the Church at Rome, the apostle here uses his Gentile name, and for the same reason. See note on Rom. i. 1. ¶ *Called to be an apostle*, or, a called apostle. See note on Rom. i. 1. ¶ *Through the will of God*. Paul was not one of the twelve original apostles of Jesus Christ. Indeed, he was an unbeliever and a persecutor, after our Lord's ascension into heaven. For this or for some other reason, his apostolical authority was often questioned by false teachers. It was fitting, therefore, that he should refer to his divine commission at the very commencement of an epistle designed, not only to announce the truth of the gospel, but to rebuke false teachers and to counteract the unhappy consequences of their labors. The manner in which Paul was called to be an apostle is related in Acts ix. 1-9; xxii. 1-16; xxvi. 9-18. Not only did he receive his commission "through the will of God," or by divine authority, but he also received his instructions in like manner. Hence he says, "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man: for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. i. 11, 12. He was not like Matthias, an apostle by election; but solely "through the will of God," who had interposed by miracle for his conversion, and had communicated the truth to him by direct revelation. By this

will of God, and Sosthenes, *our* brother,

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them

modest reference to his "heavenly calling," the apostle admonished his brethren of their duty to give diligent heed to his words. ¶ *And Sosthenes*. This person is generally supposed to have been the same who is mentioned, Acts xviii. 17, where he is represented as engaged in an "insurrection against Paul," and as involved in unpleasant consequences. If this be the same, he was subsequently converted, and became as prominent among the Christians as he formerly had been among the Jews at Corinth, when he was "the chief ruler of the synagogue." His name is joined with that of the apostle in this salutation, perhaps because he was the amanuensis on this occasion. See note on Rom. xvi. 22; or perhaps, because the acknowledged conversion of one holding such a high official position among the Jews might be expected to have a favorable influence upon the Jewish converts at Corinth. It was not unusual for Paul thus to join with himself some prominent brother in his salutations to the churches. See 2 Cor. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; 1 Thess. i. 1.

2. *Unto the church of God*. The church at Corinth was gathered under the personal exertions of Paul during his residence there for "a year and six months." See Acts xviii. 1-18. It was gathered chiefly from among the Gentiles, the Jews having generally refused to hear the gospel. Its members were formerly among the most profane of the Gentiles, their city being pre-eminently conspicuous for wickedness. They had embraced the gos-

that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours :

pel, and acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ: yet they were very far from having attained perfection. Many of their philosophical errors were not yet eradicated, and many of their vicious practices were not yet reformed, as is evident from what follows in this epistle. Nevertheless, with all their imperfections, both of faith and of conduct, the apostle recognizes them as the "church of God." They had been called, according to the will of God, 2 Tim. i. 9; and the work of sanctification had been commenced in them. Notwithstanding all their errors, they cherished faith in God, and acknowledged his son Jesus as the Christ: and notwithstanding their many imperfections in morality, they were not entirely destitute of a spirit of righteousness. Instead of repudiating them, and refusing them fellowship, on account of their short-comings, the apostle acknowledged them as brethren, gave thanks to God for so much improvement as they had experienced, ver. 4-6, and exhorted them throughout the epistle to strive for a more correct faith and a more pure conduct, so that they might enjoy a fulness of the divine gifts and be blameless in all things, ver. 7, 8. ¶ *To them that are sanctified*, or, made holy. Of course, we are not to understand that they had already attained perfection in holiness; for this is not true of Christians generally, and certainly not of the persons here addressed, as is manifest from the whole scope of this epistle. But they were separated from the heathen; they had professed faith in Christ; they had renounced their former idolatrous opinions and practices, they had made an effort to break off their sins by righteousness; their spirits had felt the influence of the divine spirit, and the work of sanctification was in progress. ¶ *Called to be saints*. See note on Rom. i. 7. ¶ *With all that in every place*, &c. It would seem that Paul

3 Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of

expected his epistle would be read by others besides the Corinthians; and to all such he offers his Christian salutation. His desire for the advancement of the gospel was not limited by geographical lines, nor was his Christian affection bounded by the extent of a particular church or sect. To all who professed the name of Christ he extended a fraternal greeting, even as he exhorted all men, everywhere, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might enter into life. ¶ *Call upon the name*, &c. That is, who call on Jesus Christ; who believe in him as a divinely-commissioned messenger, and acknowledge him to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 11. See note on Rom. x. 13. ¶ *Both theirs and ours*. Jesus Christ is the equal Lord of all his disciples. To all, there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." Eph. iv. 5, 6. With much propriety the apostle announces this fact in the outset, as he is about to rebuke his brethren for their unchristian divisions. He thus intimates the great impropriety of party names, in honor of mere men; when the only proper subjection of Christians is to one Lord and master. Of what consequence is it, whether the gospel be preached by Paul, or Apollos, or Peter? It should be remembered that they are only ministers of the word; but that Jesus is "the author and finisher of faith," Heb. xii. 2, and the only Lord to whom our allegiance is due, with the single exception of him by whom we were placed under subjection to our Lord's authority, ch. xv. 27.

3. *Grace be unto you*, &c. See notes on Rom. i. 7.

4. *I thank my God*, &c. See note on Rom. i. 8. The apostle had occasion to reprove his brethren for many faults both in word and in deed; yet he recognized some good in them, for which he was thankful to God, and was will-

God which is given you by Jesus Christ;

ing to award them the meed of approbation. He would not deny them the Christian name, because their faith was not in all points accurate; nor would he withhold Christian fellowship because they were not entirely pure from sin. On the contrary, he commended them for what they had received or attained, and then, by reproof and exhortation, stimulated them to strive for more knowledge and greater purity. ¶ *For the grace of God.* Here, as everywhere in his epistles, Paul ascribes to divine grace the salvation of men from error and from sinfulness. The Corinthian brethren had turned from idols unto God, and had abandoned many of their sinful practices; and this saving change in them is attributed by the apostle to the grace of God. They had not converted themselves. They had not, by their own strength, wrought out their salvation; but the grace of God had wrought in them, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. Phil. ii. 12, 13. It is generally understood that the reference here is particularly to the miraculous gifts of the spirit; but it may be doubted whether the meaning be not more general, including not only miraculous gifts, but the ordinary influences and fruits of the spirit. See note on Rom. xii. 6. ¶ *By Jesus Christ.* Or through Jesus Christ, the appointed medium of communication between God and man. The apostle recognizes God as the author and bestower of all blessings; yet they are bestowed through his Son, whom he hath constituted the head of every man, ch. xi. 3. All the present blessings of the gospel are derived through the ministry of Jesus, who revealed it, and who exemplified its nature in his conduct, and demonstrated the truth of its crowning promise, by his own resurrection and ascension. He is to remain the minister of God unto men for good, until he shall have subdued all hearts, and completed the work committed unto him. Then, and not sooner, will he resign his dominion,

5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all

and God shall be all in all, ch. xv. 28. Through him, spiritual gifts are communicated to men; and through him, it is meet that their gratitude and thanksgivings should be rendered to his God and theirs. See note on Rom. i. 8.

5. *That in every thing.* Namely of a spiritual character; for the apostle is here speaking of the fruits of divine grace, ver. 4, which were bestowed on the Corinthians through Jesus Christ. Two particular gifts are specified in this verse, which are clearly of this character. The temporal blessings of life were enjoyed by believers in common with unbelievers, except so far as they were prevented by persecution. But spiritual blessings were enjoyed through faith; in these, unbelievers had no present part or lot. ¶ *Ye are enriched by him.* Not only were they partakers of the blessings, but they had received them in abundant measure. "By the use of this word, the apostle intends doubtless to denote the fact that these blessings had been conferred on them abundantly; and also that this was a valuable endowment, so as to be properly called a treasure. The mercies of God are not only conferred abundantly on his people, but they are a bestowment of inestimable value." — *Barnes.* The spiritual blessings here indicated were valuable in a two-fold sense: they contributed to the spiritual growth and happiness of those upon whom they were bestowed, and moreover enabled them to communicate happiness to others by bringing them to a knowledge of the truth. ¶ *In all utterance.* The apostle probably here refers not to the natural ability of his brethren to utter their thoughts in appropriate language, but to the communicated power of *speaking in tongues*, or using foreign languages, which they had never learned, but which were native to some of their hearers. See ch. xiv. ¶ *And in all knowledge.* That is, of the truths of the gospel. The apostle does not here refer to what is sometimes denominated human

utterance, and *in* all knowledge;

6 Even as the testimony

knowledge, or a knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences. Not many of the Corinthian brethren were educated men; not many of them were eminently skilled in polite literature. It was not from the highly-polished class that the larger portion of early teachers or disciples was taken. But the persons here addressed had received a knowledge of the gospel, through the preaching of Paul and his associates. They had believed the truths uttered, and although in many respects their knowledge was deficient, which deficiencies this epistle was partly designed to supply, yet it was so far superior to that which their unbelieving fellow-citizens possessed, that they might well be said to be "enriched — in all knowledge."

6. *Even as.* Macknight translates *when*, connecting this verse with the preceding: "ye were enriched with every gift by him, even with all speech and all knowledge, when the testimony of Christ was confirmed among you." This gives a good sense to the passage, more natural, perhaps, than the common version. Yet it must be confessed that the word used here, though of very frequent occurrence in the New Testament, is nowhere else translated *when*, except in Acts vii. 17. The more common opinion is, that this particle connects the two verses thus: the miraculous gifts imparted to believers furnished a confirmation of the gospel, and as those gifts remained, they continued to afford confirmation, even as at the beginning: or, these gifts remain with believers confirming their faith, even as their faith was first established by the bestowment of the gifts. ¶ *The testimony of Christ.* That is, the testimony concerning Christ. Probably none of the Corinthian brethren had enjoyed the personal instructions of Christ. But they had received the testimony concerning Christ from his authorized agents, and had been convinced of its truth. The gospel which Paul had preached to the Corinthians

of Christ was confirmed in you:

7 So that ye come behind in

is called "the testimony of Christ," because it embraced an account of his doctrines, his labors, his sufferings, his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Such was the gospel which he was commanded to preach. Acts xxvi. 16-18; and such was the gospel which he did preach, Acts xxiii. 1-11; 1 Cor. xv. 1-9. ¶ *Was confirmed in you.* Or, confirmed among you. Confirmed in your hearts, or established among you as a truth. The word here translated *confirmed* is used in a similar sense, Mark xvi. 20: "the Lord — confirming the word with signs following." In like manner was the "testimony of Christ" confirmed or established or demonstrated, among the Corinthian converts, by signs and miraculous gifts, as well as by the influence of the divine spirit in their hearts. See 2 Cor. xii. 12, 13. One of these gifts, the ability to speak in foreign tongues, is specified in the preceding verse. The apostle believed, and his disciples believed, that divine truth was demonstrated by miracles, and that miracles were a sufficient demonstration of the truth: in other words, that this kind of demonstration was both proper and conclusive. His Lord and ours had before appealed to the miraculous power of God exhibited among men, as a sufficient proof of the truths which he taught. John x. 37, 38. See also Acts ii. 22. There are those who reject the miracles, and yet profess to believe the gospel. A firm belief in the miracles might add confirmation and stability to their faith.

7. *Ye come behind in no gift.* Ye are not lacking in any gift. Equivalent to being enriched, as in ver. 5. The idea is, that they had shared abundantly in the gifts of the spirit; perhaps not exclusively miraculous gifts, but with these also the "joy of the Holy Ghost," which accompanied their belief, 1 Thess. i. 6, and all the purifying and comforting influences of the divine spirit, which were shed abroad in their hearts. In common with other Christians, they had

no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be*

ample proof that the "testimony of Christ" was true, both from the outward manifestation of miraculous power, and the inward operation of the spirit. ¶ *Waiting for.* Anxiously desiring; intensely longing; hopefully expecting. See note on Rom. viii. 19, where the same word occurs. ¶ *The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Commentators have generally understood this to refer to what is styled the "day of judgment." Some, however, who firmly believed in such a day and in a judgment which should make a final separation of mankind, have doubted or denied that such is the reference in the text. "It is difficult to say whether the apostle means the final judgment, or our Lord's coming to destroy Jerusalem, and make an end of Jewish polity. See 1 Thess. iii. 13. As he does not explain himself particularly, he must refer to a subject with which they were well acquainted. As the Jews, in general, continued to contradict and blaspheme, it is no wonder if the apostle should be directed to point out to the believing Gentiles that the judgments of God were speedily to fall upon this rebellious people, and scatter them over the face of the earth; which shortly afterward took place." — *Clarke.* "So that now there is no need of any addition to be made, but only that you persevere in what you have, expecting this coming of Christ to the deliverance of the faithful, and remarkable destruction of all other his enemies and crucifiers." — *Hammond.* It may not be useless to remark that the word here translated *coming*, though it occurs eighteen times in the New Testament, is nowhere else so translated. It is twelve times rendered *revelation*; twice, *revealed*; once, *manifestation*; once, *appearing*; once, *lighten*; and in the text, *coming*. Open manifestation, or revelation, is the evident meaning of the word, in all places. Indeed it is the first word of the last Book in the New Testament, and has been adopted as its title. The corresponding verb occurs twenty-six times,

and in every instance is translated *reveal* or *revealed*. The ordinary use of the word, therefore, by no means indicates a personal approach or coming of an individual. It rather denotes a revelation of what was before unknown, or the manifestation of the power and presence of an invisible being by visible signs. And such is doubtless its meaning here. The power of Christ was about to be remarkably manifested in the establishment of the gospel. And as the preservation of his disciples from the terrible calamity which overwhelmed his principal persecutors was a signal event connected with that establishment, very probably there is a special reference to it in this place. But to whatever revelation or manifestation the apostle may refer, it was near at hand, something which he and his brethren were expecting and waiting for. But the "final coming" of the Lord Jesus, at the "general judgment," which some so confidently expect, has not yet occurred, though the Corinthian Christians departed this life eighteen centuries ago; and how much longer it will be delayed, no man knoweth.

8. *Who shall also confirm you.* Shall establish you in the faith of the gospel, and make you firm in the midst of all trials and temptations. *Who* seems here to refer to God, ver. 4, rather than to Christ, ver. 7. Christ may properly be said to strengthen and confirm the faith of his disciples. But in this place the apostle is speaking of what God had done, and would do. He thanks God, ver. 4, for imparting his grace, through Jesus Christ, to man, and giving them both outward and inward demonstration of the truth which had been proclaimed to them, ver. 5, 6: and appeals to God's faithfulness, ver. 8, as a pledge that the work, so happily begun, should be made perfect. It is natural, therefore, to understand him here as declaring that God would confirm and strengthen the faith of believers. ¶ *To the end.* Either to the end of life, or, perhaps more probably, to the time

blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

indicated by revelation or manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 7, — a time of peculiar trial and danger. Amidst the convulsions which should then occur, there was danger of discouragement and defection. Men's hearts should fail them for fear. Luke xxi. 26. But those who endured unto the end should be saved. Matt. x. 22. Our Lord forewarned his disciples of the same perils, while he was with them on the earth. The Corinthians were in less danger than those at Jerusalem; but they were not wholly exempt. The convulsion was wide-spread when christianity was established upon the ruins of Judaism, and the divine mission of Christ and the truth of his gospel were demonstrated to the world by the mighty power of God. ¶ *Blameless.* "Without just cause of accusation."—*Macknight.* Absolute freedom from sinfulness is not attainable on earth. The most devout Christian has daily occasion to utter with fervency and deep humility the supplication, "Forgive us our sins." Luke xi. 4. Some modern Christians have fancied themselves to be perfect, and have thanked God publicly that they had been able to live for many years entirely free from sin. But they did not learn this from their great Master, nor from his apostles, who taught that no man in the flesh becomes absolutely sinless, and that those who imagined the contrary deceived themselves. Rom. iii. 9, 10, 19, 20; vii. 14-25; James iii. 2; 2 John i. 8. What the apostle means is that, by confirming them unto the end, God would keep the Corinthian brethren steadfast in the faith and enable them to walk worthy of their vocation; so that when the time of sharp trial should come, they would not be unduly alarmed, nor be liable as transgressors to be involved in destruction. This much they might confidently expect him to do, if they remained faithful. ¶ *In the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.* In the day when he should be manifestly revealed. See note on ver. 7.

9. *God is faithful.* "That is, God

9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship

is true, and constant, and will adhere to his promises. He will not deceive. He will not promise, and then fail to perform: he will not commence anything which he will not perfect and finish. The object of Paul in introducing the idea of the faithfulness of God here, is to show the reason for believing that the Christians at Corinth would be kept unto everlasting life. The evidence that they will persevere depends on the fidelity of God; and the argument of the apostle is, that as they had been called by him into the fellowship of his Son, his faithfulness of character would render it certain that they would be kept to eternal life. The same idea he has presented in Phil. i. 6."—*Barnes.* This interpretation is founded on a correct principle, though it carries the argument beyond the point here embraced by the apostle, who speaks of certain favors to be enjoyed in the present life, rather than salvation in the next. The greater, however, includes the less; and the same faithfulness which secures the final result equally secures all the intermediate steps. ¶ *Ye were called.* See note on Rom. i. 7. ¶ *Unto the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord.* During his ministry on earth, our Lord declared that he would dwell with his faithful disciples, by the influences of his spirit. John xiv. 23. And he devoutly prayed to the Father that this fellowship might be realized by his disciples. John xvii. 20-26. The beloved apostle John, who imbibed the spirit of his master in an extraordinary degree, testifies concerning the same fellowship as the fruit of a living faith in the gospel. "That which we have seen and heard declare we to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John i. 3. The true Christian recognizes his relationship both to the Father and to the Son. He does not regard God merely as the Creator and Ruler of the universe; but he exercises a filial affection to him, as

of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

10 Now I beseech you, brethren,

the Father of Spirits and the beneficent source of all good. He does not regard the Son as a stranger, sent to deliver a message to men, wholly unconcerned as to its character or results; but his heart is warmed by the love for humanity displayed by the Son, by his labors and sufferings, by his exertions to save men from their sins, and by his assurances that the same divine love which occasioned his mission would finally draw all men unto himself. His heart is attached by the bonds of love to the great Giver of blessings, and to the blessed Mediator through whom they are bestowed; and thus he enjoys fellowship with both.

Thus far the apostle has reminded his Corinthian brethren of the blessings already bestowed upon them, and has commended them for the degree of improvement which they have made. Yet they were far from perfection. Much was lacking in their Christian character, in respect both to faith and works. In what follows, he freely points out their errors, rebukes their faults, and strives to impart a more correct faith and a more pure life.

10. *Now I beseech you, brethren.* The transition here, from what is merely introductory to the main purpose of the Epistle, is very well expressed thus: "That therefore which I first exhort you to, and that with all earnestness possible, as the prime addition to those gifts and graces that are among you, is this, that ye all teach the same doctrine, and nourish charity and unity: that there be no divisions in your churches, but that ye be compacted and united, as members of the same body, in the same belief and affections." — *Hammond.* It is observable that, although Paul, as a divinely commissioned apostle, had full authority to rebuke, yet here he adopts the milder form of exhortation, ever beseeching his brethren to give heed to those things which were indispensable to their peace. Elsewhere he does rebuke them, even with sharp severity; but first he

ren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there

would convince them of his affectionate regard, so that they might accept his severe rebukes as an evidence of love, not as indicating hatred. Men submissively accept rebukes and even chastisement, when clearly seen to be administered in love; while they instinctively rebel against either, when accompanied by a manifestation of wrath and hatred. ¶ *By the name.* By the authority; or, more properly perhaps, by the spirit. The spirit of Jesus was loving and peaceful. Well might the apostle appeal to that spirit, when beseeching his brethren to cease from bitter contention, and to live in peace with each other. If the exhortation had taken the form of a command, it would be more natural to suppose an appeal was made to the authority of Christ, which was acknowledged by all his professed disciples. ¶ *Our Lord Jesus Christ.* Paul does not exhort his brethren to heal their divisions, merely from a regard to their own good; but he asks them to consider the spirit of the Master, who had earnestly besought the Father that his disciples might live in peace and be one in him. John xvii. 21. ¶ *That ye all speak the same thing.* It would seem that, even in that early age, the brethren at Corinth not only acknowledged different leaders, but differed from each other in opinion in regard to some of the doctrines of the gospel. What those differences were, will more fully appear in the subsequent part of the Epistle. This is substantially an exhortation that all should hold fast the truth, and speak according to the revelation which they had received from the apostles. But, from what follows, it would seem that the evil which the apostle deprecated was not merely a difference of opinion, but strife and contention in all things spiritual, resulting in mutual crimination and ill-feeling. It is well observed by *Barnes*, that, "To speak the same things stands opposed to speaking different and conflicting things, or to

be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined to-

controversy; and although *perfect* uniformity of opinion cannot be expected among men on the subject of religion any more than on other subjects, yet on the great and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, Christians may be agreed: on all points in which they differ, they may manifest a good spirit; and on all subjects they may express their sentiments in the language of the Bible, and thus speak the same things." ¶ *And that there be no divisions among you.* Literally, no *schisms*, or rending into parts. The same word occurs, Matt. ix. 16; Mark ii. 21; 1 Cor. xii. 25. "As heresy is a departing from the communion of the church, in respect of doctrine, or some fundamental article of religion, so schism is taken for a separation from the church for external things. Thus the divisions among the Corinthians were not about matters of faith, but occasioned from their having men's persons in admiration: every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ."—*Cruden.* Doubtless the Corinthians differed in matters of faith; but the apostle here refers more particularly to their divisions into parties, as followers of different teachers. ¶ *But that we be perfectly joined together.* The original phrase, as well as its translation, denotes not so much the preservation of unity already existing, as the reunion of parts which have been separated. To join together implies a previous lack of union. The Corinthians had already been divided into parties. The apostle exhorts them to heal their divisions, and to become reunited in the spirit of love. ¶ *In the same mind and in the same judgment.* "Mind refers to the view taken by the understanding; judgment to the practical decision arrived at."—*Conybeare.* There is such an infinite variety in the constitution of the human mind, that identity of opinion in regard to religious truths is absolutely impossible among men. We cannot therefore suppose this to be the subject of the apostle's exhortation. It is possible, however, that men should cherish a kind and tolerant spirit, and

gether in the same mind and in the same judgment.

refrain from strife and bitterness in regard to their differences of opinion. They can cherish a spirit of love towards those who entertain and promulgate false doctrines; and their efforts to convince others of their errors will be more effectual, when guided by this spirit, than when characterized by enmity. Perfect union of feeling, manifested in love to God and love to man, may be a legitimate object of hope; but to hope for a perfect unity of belief on all religious doctrines, while there is such a diversity in the human intellect, is truly hoping against hope. The apostle must, therefore, be understood to exhort his brethren to come together in a spirit of love, which is the spirit of the gospel, and thus, with one mind and in one judgment, resolve to live in peace, rejoicing in the revelation of the gospel. Agreement in belief "can be no further the matter of exhortation than it is in our power to obey it; seeing, then, it is not in any man's power to change his settled judgment, or to think otherwise upon our entreaty, because our exhortation gives no conviction to the understanding, it follows that this exhortation must only be to do what was in the power of the Corinthians, namely, (1) to prevail with them to lay aside their strife, envy, and divisions, 1 Cor. iii. 3, and the sad consequences of them, debate, wrath, back-biting, whispering, swelling, tumult, 2 Cor. xii. 20; and to this the reason of this exhortation leads: Be of one mind and judgment; for I hear that there be contentions among you, ver. 11; and (2) to engage them unanimously to own the doctrine they had received, and he had preached to them, 1 Cor. xv. 1, which, if they were so minded, might easily be done, since they so lately had received it, the heads of it were so few, 1 Cor. xv. 3, and it was so easy for them to consult the apostle in their doubts of the sense of what he had delivered."—*Whitby.* The lapse of time and the lack of present opportunity of personal intercourse with the apostles, render unity of belief more difficult

11 For it hath been declared unto me, of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house*

of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now this I say, that

now than formerly. The only Christian union we can now hope for, is a union of feeling, a mutual forbearance and toleration, a mutual kindness of heart, and a mutual willingness to give a hearty God-speed to each other in every good word and work.

11. *For it hath been declared unto me of you.* The church of Corinth had previously addressed a letter of inquiry to the apostle, ch. vii. 1; but it does not appear that they mentioned the divisions and contentions which existed among them. The apostle derived his information through another channel. ¶ *My brethren.* Notwithstanding their errors, and their faults, which he was about to rebuke, the apostle addresses them as brethren, thus manifesting the kind and generous spirit which he exhorts them to cultivate and cherish. ¶ *By them which are of the house of Chloe.* Of the family or household of Chloe. This person is not mentioned elsewhere. Whether she resided in Corinth, and some of her household had visited Ephesus where this Epistle is supposed to have been written, or whether she resided in Ephesus, and some of her household had recently returned from a visit to Corinth, does not appear. It was enough that Paul had received credible information; and upon this he acted. ¶ *That there are contentions among you.* See note on ver. 10.

12. *Now this I say.* This is what I have heard, and what I have reason to believe. Upon sufficient evidence I say that you are divided into contending factions, calling yourselves by different names. ¶ *Everyone of you saith.* The whole church appears to have been infested with this spirit of division and contention. The allegation is not that some among you separated themselves from the body of the church and called themselves by a distinctive name: but the evil was general, and called for a general rebuke. ¶ *I am of Paul.* It has been questioned by some whether the apostle designs to give a literal description of the parties, or whether he

uses the names of himself and others merely as descriptive epithets, for the purpose of omitting to name the leaders of the several factions. It is most natural to understand him literally; and the condition of the church at Corinth seems to justify a literal interpretation. Paul was emphatically the apostle to the Gentiles; and as he had personally preached the gospel at Corinth and most of his converts were Gentiles, it was natural that a large portion of them, in the divisions which followed, should adhere to his doctrines and distinguish themselves by his name. He insisted on the freedom of the Gentiles from the Jewish ceremonial law; and some of his converts even despised and ridiculed the opposite doctrine, for which he admonished them in ch. viii. Like many in modern days, embracing a right principle they pursued it to excess, and regarded it as more important than the great doctrine itself in which the principle was involved. They contended more earnestly for what they regarded as peculiar to Paul, than in regard to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, which were alike preached by all the apostles. ¶ *And I of Apollos.* See note on Acts xviii. 24. Apollos is described as an eloquent man, and is supposed to have charmed many by the graces of oratory, which Paul had not exhibited in his preaching to them, ch. ii. 4. The faction calling themselves by his name, regarded the manner more highly than the matter, and prided themselves on their ability to imitate the rhetorical elegance of Apollos, while they contemptuously regarded the plainness of speech which characterized the discourses of Paul. "To trace the original of this schism, we may have recourse to the two-fold division of this church into converted Jews and Gentiles, which appears from their story, Acts xviii. The Gentile part, perhaps, boasted the name of Paul and Apollos; the Jewish, that of Cephas and Christ. But each of them

every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apol-

los; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

again was divided into two. Some of the Gentile party revered Paul, either alone, or certainly above all others, as their father, their apostle, and the first that brought in the gospel among them, however he preached plainly, in a low style, and not according to human wisdom and art. But some preferred Apollos before him, as a more profound, more elegant, and more quaint doctor; see Acts xviii. 24. Hence that large discourse of the apostle of this very manner of preaching, from ch. i. 17 to ch. iv. 6; where he saith that he transferred those things in a certain figure to himself and Apollos."

—*Lightfoot*. ¶ *And I of Cephas*. This was the Hebrew name of Peter, which, as well as the Greek *Petros*, signifies a rock. See note on Matt. xvi. 18. Peter was regarded as the apostle of the circumcision, and sometimes was induced to conform to the prejudices of the Jews in regard to their ceremonial law. See note on Acts x. 28. As in every church planted by the apostles were some converted Jews, who retained many of their former prejudices, and who occasioned much trouble to Paul, so here in Corinth were some of this class, who naturally selected the name of Peter as a designation of their faction. For although it does not appear that Peter had ever visited Corinth, yet they had heard of him, and had very probably been assured by the Judaizing teachers that Peter held the ceremonial law sacred. This was not true concerning him, yet he had given some occasion for such a report. See Gal. ii. 11–21.

¶ *And I of Christ*. "It has been much questioned whether, by the clause 'and I of Christ,' we are to understand that there was a *Christ party* in the Corinthian church, by a monstrous abuse of words taking that name to designate some class peculiarity, or whether by that clause St. Paul meant to signify that there were an exceptional number who refused discipleship to others, and took the name only of their great Master. There is nothing in the construction to indicate that

those who called themselves 'of Christ' were less sectarian than the others; and as there evidently had sprung up in the Corinthian Church a strong opposition to the apostolic authority of Paul, a vehement Jewish party who deemed his Christian doctrine of freedom from the law, and of the spirituality of the gospel, to be a scandalous innovation, it may be that in the name of the *Christ party* there is a covert attack on the apostolic character of St. Paul, intimating that he was not, like Peter, a personal disciple and companion of the Lord; and we shall afterwards find that against such a party St. Paul had expressly to defend the authenticity of his apostolic commission."—*Thom*. It may be added that the apostle speaks in general terms of the four classes named in this verse as disorderly factions. If the last named had been truly distinguished by their regard for the doctrines preached by Christ, and had conscientiously refrained from adopting any name except that of Christian, we might reasonably expect him to commend their example to the imitation of their brethren. As he intimates no opinion that they were more worthy or less contentious than the others, we may safely conclude that in the adoption of their name they were as sectarian as those who adopted the name of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.

13. *Is Christ divided?* The apostle at once strikes at the root of the evil. He calls attention to "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Heb. xii. 2. No other name than his should be appropriated as the head of a sect. His disciples may call themselves by his name, but by the name of no mere man, not even by the name of one of his apostles. Christ is the only "mediator between God and men," 1 Tim. ii. 5, the messenger of the new and better covenant, which he sealed with his own blood. He is the head of every man, and his honors should not be divided. All his apostles were commissioned by him, and all preach substantially the same doctrine. Why,

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

then, adopt the name of either, as if he should be believed rather than the others, or as if Christ had sent contradictory messages by his different messengers? ¶ *Was Paul crucified for you?* The crowning act of our Lord's ministry is here put for the whole. As if he had said, was Paul the Son of God? was Paul sent to save his people from their sins? did Paul labor and teach in the Father's name, and did he submit to the ignominious death of the cross for your sakes? Do you regard Paul as your Saviour? If not, why call yourselves by his name, rather than by the name of Christ? The modest and unassuming character of the apostle should not be overlooked. He does not inquire whether Apollos or Peter was crucified for the Corinthians. Had he done so, it might have indicated a jealousy that his brethren received more than their share of honor from the church at Corinth. Instead of this, passing by the impropriety of those who claimed to be "of Apollos" and "of Cephas," except by implication, he addresses himself directly to those who called themselves by his own name, and earnestly disclaims all such honor. He was willing, to be sure, to sacrifice his life for the furtherance of the gospel, which also he did in due time. But he had not yet been crucified; nor was he willing to accept honors which belonged only to his Lord and theirs. ¶ *Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?* Were ye baptized as the disciples of Paul? Were ye not rather baptized as the disciples of Christ, the true head and ruler of the church? "To be baptized into any one's name, or into any one, is solemnly, by that ceremony, to enter himself a disciple of him into whose name he is baptized, with profession to receive his doctrine and rules, and submit to his authority; a very good argument here, why they should be called by no one's name but Christ's."—*Locke*. Paul appeals to his brethren that he never proposed him-

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

self as the head of a sect, or desired that any should be baptized as his disciples.

14. *I thank God that I baptized none of you.* The reason follows in the next verse. Suspicion of a wish to be acknowledged as a leader might have attached to him, if he had personally baptized the Corinthian converts. Though he refrained from administering this rite for a different reason, ver. 17, yet now he rejoiced that he was thereby the more free from reasonable suspicion. "The two verses from the 14th, in which he disowns the leadership amongst them, are in the most characteristic manner of St. Paul. The dash of indifference with which he treats the whole subject of baptism, when he finds that the converts were taking class names from those who had baptized them, breathes at once his genuineness, and the scornfulness with which his natural temper set aside all comparisons between spiritual realities and outward form. 'I thank God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius'; and then, as if the matter had been too trivial to live distinctly in the memory, he adds, 'and I baptized the family of Stephanas, — and whether I baptized any other of you, I know not.'" — *Thom*. While he did not disregard any proper form or ceremony, he always considered and represented all such forms and ceremonies as subordinate to the things signified by them. His great object was to induce men to believe the gospel, to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and to love and worship God as the Father of their spirits and the supreme source of all good. While engaged in this great work, he could not turn aside for mere ceremonial purposes. ¶ *But Crispus.* Crispus was "the chief ruler of the synagogue," Acts xviii. 8, and one of the earliest converts in Corinth. Perhaps the fact of his early conversion, or of his prominent position in the city, induced Paul to baptize him with his own hands. The converts gen-

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

erally in that city are supposed to have been baptized by Silas and Timothy, who joined Paul soon after he arrived at Corinth. Acts xviii. 5. ¶ *And Gaius.* We do not find the name of Gaius in the account of Paul's ministry of eighteen months at Corinth. A person of the same name, and probably the same individual, is named as a prominent disciple, Acts xix. 29; xx. 4; and at his house in Corinth Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, styling him "my host, and of the whole church." Rom. xvi. 23. Paul may have baptized him for reasons similar to those which induced him to baptize Crispus. These were prominent exceptions to his general rule of conduct.

15. *Lest any should say, &c.* Lest any should allege their baptism by me, as an excuse for calling themselves by my name; or lest any others should pretend that I had attempted to become the head of a faction, by baptizing men as my disciples.

16. *And I baptized also the household.* Or family; which may be understood to mean the parents, and children, or to include all others also who dwelt with them. This declaration is susceptible of different interpretations; and at this distance of time, and in the absence of corroborating evidence, it is not easy to decide which is correct. It may be understood as a correction of the statement in ver. 14. After naming Crispus and Gaius, who were prominent men at Corinth, it occurred to the apostle that he had also baptized these in the house of Stephanas. Or it may be understood, not as a correction of the former statement, but as an addition to it; — the family of Stephanas consisting chiefly of children. He had baptized only two prominent members of the Church, and in addition to these had also baptized a few children, and others of less note. Or, again, as some suppose, Stephanas did not reside at Corinth when he was baptized, ch. xvi. 15, but had afterwards removed to that city; in which case the apostle may be

16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; be-

understood to mean that he had baptized only Crispus and Gaius at Corinth, but had also baptized the family of Stephanas, who had since become members of that church. In either case, there is no contradiction between this verse and ver. 14; and in either case, also, it would seem that the whole family was baptized, including children. See note on Acts xvi. 33. ¶ *Stephanas.* This person is not elsewhere named, except in ch. xvi. 15, 17. He is there described as the "first fruits," or one of the earliest converts, of Achaia, and it may be reasonably supposed that he was one of the messengers sent to Paul by the Church at Corinth. "The Greek writers suppose that Stephanas was the prison-keeper at Philippi in Macedonia, who removed to Corinth after he had been converted and baptized by Paul. Acts xvi. 27." — *Calmet.* How well founded this opinion may be, we have no means to decide. ¶ *Besides.* In addition to those already named. ¶ *I know not whether I baptized any other.* He knew that he had baptized comparatively very few during his whole ministry; as he was specially commissioned for a different purpose, ver. 14. Whether any of that small number had subsequently removed to Corinth, besides the household of Stephanas, he knew not. He had named all of whom he had any certain knowledge. "Here the apostle insinuates that he is speaking, not by inspiration, but from memory. He did not remember whether he baptized any other of the Corinthians. The spirit was given to the apostles indeed, to lead them into all truth; but it was truth relative to the plan of man's salvation which was thus made known to them, and not truth like the fact here mentioned, the certain knowledge of which was of no use whatever to the world." — *Macknight.* The general idea expressed in ver. 14–17, is that Paul had baptized very few converts, and that he was thankful that he had baptized no more, lest he should be suspected of a

sides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the

gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

desire to become the head of a party. He disclaimed the leadership, and acknowledged himself as a servant not only of the Master but of the brethren. 2 Cor. iv. 5. He was thankful that he had done nothing which might indicate a contrary purpose. Yet in forbearing to administer baptism as a Christian rite, he was not derelict in duty. See ver. 17.

17. *For Christ sent me.* Though Paul was not converted until after the crucifixion of our Lord, yet he always claimed to have received his apostolic commission and instructions from Jesus Christ himself. Acts xxvi. 15-18; Gal. i. 11, 12. ¶ *Not to baptize.* Not that he was forbidden to baptize, but that this was not the principal part of his duty. He had a much more important charge, to fit men for baptism, to convert them to the truth, to convince them that Jesus was the true Messiah, so that they might rejoice in his gospel, and gladly enrol themselves as his disciples through baptism. Faith was first to be implanted in the heart; baptism followed as a sign. Acts viii. 36, 37. Some even received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit before they were baptized. Acts x. 44-48. Hence it follows that baptism, however proper as a sign, or profession, or pledge of discipleship, is not to be regarded as a "saving ordinance," or worthy to be compared in importance with the faithful preaching of the gospel. In forbearing to baptize personally, Paul imitated his Master; for "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." John iv. 2. In like manner, Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius and his household, but did not personally baptize them. Acts x. 47, 48. "Paul was not a baptist among the Gentiles, as John was a baptist among the Jews; nor was the office of the one and the other alike. The Jews, even from their cradles, were instructed in the doctrine of the Messiah, and in the articles of religion, so that John had

no need to spend much pains to prepare them for baptism in the name of the Messiah now to come, and for the reception of the faith of the gospel. But how much pains must Paul take among the Gentiles, who had not so much as even heard either of Christ or of the true God? He preached therefore daily; and, as it were, drop by drop instilled into them the doctrine of religion; and it was no small labor leisurely to lead them to a baptizable measure of knowledge, if I may have leave so to express it." — *Lightfoot.*

¶ *But to preach the gospel.* To proclaim the glad tidings of salvation from sin through Jesus Christ. See note on Luke ii. 10. This was the great work to which Paul was called and set apart; and he did not choose to let minor matters interfere with it. He would not leave the word of God, in order to administer rites or to perform services which did not require apostolical gifts. The other apostles had previously adopted a similar rule of action. See Acts vi. 2. ¶ *Not with wisdom of words.* The subject here introduced, namely, the manner in which Paul had preached the gospel, is pursued to the end of the third chapter. It is a triumphant refutation of the objection urged against him, that he had not exhibited the graces of rhetoric, nor enriched his discourses with the treasures of philosophy. He did not seek such ornaments, but rather avoided them as injurious to the great object of his mission. His views are fully developed as he proceeds. By *wisdom of words*, in this place, we are not to understand truly wise words, for such words were effectually used by the apostle; but the reference is to words of worldly wisdom, the subtleties of vain philosophy, adorned with rhetorical graces. Christ did not commission him to preach in this manner. The gospel was to be proclaimed and enforced with more convincing evidence of its truth. ¶ *Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.* Paul

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which

are saved, it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will

preached "Jesus Christ and him crucified," ch. ii. 2, as the only proper foundation for Christian belief. He was not willing that the power of truth thus exhibited should be obscured by philosophy. "The design of Paul here cannot be to condemn true eloquence and just reasoning, but to rebuke the vain parade, and the glittering ornaments, and dazzling rhetoric, which were objects of so much esteem at Greece. A real belief of the gospel, a simple and natural statement of its sublime truths, will admit of and prompt to the most manly and noble kind of eloquence. The highest powers of mind and the most varied learning may find ample scope for the illustration and the defence of the simple doctrines of the gospel of Christ. But it does not depend for its success on these, but on its pure and heavenly truths, borne to the mind by the agency of the Holy Spirit." — *Barnes*.

18. *For the preaching of the Cross.* Or the preaching of a crucified Saviour, ch. ii. 2. ¶ *To them that perish.* Or, are in a perishing condition; who are yet destitute of the influences of saving grace. See note on John iii. 15. ¶ *Foolishness.* Or, folly. When Jesus taught in Judea, the Scribes and Pharisees, contemning his humble origin and lack of scholastic education, spurned his instructions as the height of folly. And equally foolish and vain they considered the preaching of the apostles, after their humble Master had been crucified. They could not endure the idea of becoming disciples of one who was born in humble life, had lived in poverty, and had suffered the most ignominious death. The preaching of the same crucified Saviour was equally foolish to the unbelieving Corinthians, who prided themselves on their skill in philosophy. Had it been announced to them, that some eminent philosopher had made an important discovery in science or in morals, and had the message been communicated by some popular orator, they would

have listened with willing ears. But when they were plainly told that among the Jews, a nation whom they despised as ignorant of philosophy, one had arisen, claiming to be a teacher of the truth, whose success in his own country was so limited that he had been crucified as an impostor; and when they were invited to believe on him as a divine teacher, whose doctrines would have a purifying effect on their hearts, and would inspire them with lively hopes of immortal blessedness, — they rejected the invitation with scorn. It was utter folly, in their estimation. ¶ *But unto us which are saved.* "To us who have come in to Christ by repentance and faith." — *Hammond*. "To us who are saved from the errors of heathenism and Judaism." — *MacKnight*. The phrase probably includes also that present deliverance from the power of sin and death which our Lord declares to be consequent upon the exercise of true faith. See John v. 24. ¶ *It is the power of God.* It exerts a divine power. It produces an effect which philosophy has in vain attempted. It discloses the divine character and purposes, it affects the heart, it inspires love, it excites hope, it imparts peace; thus giving full assurance that it is of heavenly origin, and not a device of human wisdom. Moreover, it is accompanied, in the hearts of believers, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, which is literally the power of God. See note on Rom. i. 16.

19. *For it is written.* See Isaiah xxix. 14. This appeal to the Old Testament is addressed particularly to the Jews at Corinth, of whom there were many. Acts xviii. 1-6. Although not a prophecy of the particular events to which the apostle refers, the passage quoted embraces a principle properly applicable to them, namely, that divine wisdom infinitely exceeds human wisdom. ¶ *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.* As the noonday sun eclipses the splendor of artificial

destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the dis-

light, so the wisdom of God exhibits the comparative folly of all the speculations of philosophy. The application of the principle here announced is found in ver. 21. ¶ *And will bring to nothing*, &c. Substantially a repetition of the preceding words. The verse is one of the Hebrew parallels, so frequent in the prophetic and poetical portions of the Old Testament.

20. *Where is the wise?* The philosopher. In early times, the learned Greeks were called *wise men*, or sages. Subsequently they assumed a more modest title, and were styled *lovers of wisdom*, or, as this Greek term appears in its English dress, *philosophers*. ¶ *Where is the scribe?* Among the Jews, the class who devoted themselves to transcribing the law, were called scribes; in process of time they became interpreters of the law. Comp. Matt. xxii. 35, and Mark xii. 28. A somewhat similar class among the Greeks had a similar designation. ¶ *Where is the disputer of this world?* "The acute and subtle sophist of this age." —*Barnes*. The word denotes one who seeks diligently for the hidden causes of things. By these several questions, the apostle by no means intimates that the philosophers and scribes and disputers had disappeared. Corinth was full of them. His meaning, as is evident from what follows, is that all their boasted wisdom had availed nothing; that it was put to shame and made to appear as foolishness by the revelation of the wisdom of God. Where, then, was their proud eminence? ¶ *Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* Hath he not revealed a wisdom so infinitely superior to all human wisdom, that the latter is comparatively foolish? Wisdom does not actually become folly; but it appears such, when contrasted with wisdom which is infinitely superior to it.

21. *For after that. Or, when, as*

puter of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom

translated by *Macknight* and *Conybeare*. The more usual meaning of the word, however, is *because*, which seems to be its meaning here. ¶ *In the wisdom of God*. According to the wise design and arrangement of God. For wise purposes, God *delayed*, for four thousand years, a full revelation of himself to mankind. To the Jews he had revealed himself partially; but, in consequence of the mutual antipathy between them and other nations, the knowledge communicated to them had made slight progress in the world. An opportunity had thus been afforded to make full trial of the strength and capacity of human reason. With what success, the language of the apostle sufficiently indicates. Many commentators understand the "wisdom of God" to mean here the wisdom displayed in the works of creation, which had failed to impress a true idea of his character upon the minds of man. But the former interpretation appears more natural. ¶ *The world*. Mankind. Particular reference is manifestly made to those who claimed superior knowledge—the wise, the scribe, the disputer. Whatever was within the scope of human ability, they professed to have accomplished; and the apostle cites them as an example of what the *world*, in its best estate, could do. ¶ *By wisdom*. By such wisdom as the human intellect could attain, unaided by revelation. By such wisdom as the best philosophers and wisest men had acquired. ¶ *Knew not God*. We are not to suppose that the heathen philosophers were entirely unconscious of the existence of God. History demonstrates that they acknowledged power superior to man. And Paul declares, Rom. i. 19–23, that they "knew God," but were guilty because they "glorified him not as God," but "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-

knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a

footed beasts, and creeping things." But although his existence was perceived through his works, the philosophers failed to discover his true character. They clothed him with attributes, not only foreign to his character, but odious and abhorrent. In the text, the apostle refers especially to their failure to perceive his design to bestow immortal life and blessedness upon mankind. ¶ *It pleased God.* Both the plan of salvation and the manner in which it was made known to men the apostle ascribes to the "good pleasure of God." See Eph. i. 9, 10. After the wise men and philosophers had vainly attempted for ages to "find out the Almighty to perfection," Job xi. 7, and to penetrate his designs, it pleased God, in his own way and by means of his own appointment, to make himself known, and to reveal that "eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph. iii. 11. ¶ *By the foolishness of preaching.* Not by foolish preaching; but by the preaching of that gospel which was accounted foolishness by the worldly-wise. ¶ *To save them that believe.* The gospel makes known the plan of final salvation through grace. But the reference here is to that special salvation which is enjoyed by believers, in the present life. "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28. "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John v. 24. "We which have believed do enter into rest." Heb. iv. 3. "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." 1 Tim. iv. 10.

22. *For the Jews require a sign.* Not merely a miracle, it would seem; for such they had witnessed, both in Jerusalem and elsewhere. Even at Corinth, Paul had abundantly exhibited such signs, as evidence of apostleship. 2 Cor.

sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a

xii. 12. But the Jews at Corinth, like their brethren at Jerusalem, required some more stupendous miracle. It had been long believed by the Jews, that when the Messiah should appear, there should be some signal manifestation of glory in the heavens. See Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4. Such signs our Lord did not choose to exhibit, and he was rejected and crucified. Such signs are supposed to have been required by the Jews at Corinth; and because they were not exhibited, many persisted in unbelief. ¶ *And the Greeks seek after wisdom.* They were so devoted to philosophy, as the summit of all knowledge, that they imagined no doctrine could be true which was not the result of subtle reasoning. Because the gospel was not presented to them in this form, they rejected it as foolishness.

23. *But we.* The apostles and ministers of Christ. ¶ *Preach Christ crucified.* Crucifixion was then regarded as the most ignominious form of death. Yet Paul did not disguise the fact that his Master had been crucified; on the contrary, he gloried in the cross. Notwithstanding the known prejudices of his hearers, he openly avowed that the gospel which he preached was revealed to men by a person not trained in the schools of philosophy nor conspicuous for worldly splendor, yet "approved of God, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him." Acts ii. 22; who "went about doing good," Acts x. 38, and testifying his Father's love, until he died on the cross, with a prayer for his murderers upon his lips. Luke xxiii. 34. Such was the teacher whom Paul recommended, as able to instruct Greek philosophers and bigoted Jews, and to make them wise unto salvation. ¶ *Stumbling-block.* See note on Rom. ix. 32. The particular "stone of offence," here referred to, at which the Jews stumbled, was the humble appearance of Christ on earth and his ignominious death; they would not accept him as a teacher from God, unless they

stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,

could have some stupendous *sign* of his divine authority. ¶ *Foolishness.* See note on ver. 18. "Because they could not believe that proclaiming supreme happiness through a man that was crucified at Judea as a malefactor, could ever comport with reason and common sense; for both the matter and manner of the preaching were opposite to every notion they had formed of what was dignified and philosophic." — *Clarke.*

24. *But unto them which are called.* To them who have received the truths of the gospel into good and honest hearts; in other words, to Christians. See note on Rom. i. 7. ¶ *Both Jews and Greeks.* God is no respecter of persons; and therefore all the nations of men whom he hath created to dwell on the face of the earth, whether Jew or Greek, whether ignorant or learned in the schools of philosophy, have an equal interest in his grace revealed in the gospel of his Son. ¶ *Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* As he was "the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3, the divine power and wisdom were manifest in him. Hence he performed those works which no man could perform except God were with him, and spake as never man spake. John iii. 2; vii. 46. Moreover, by the influence of his spirit in the heart, he gives the believer full assurance that the wisdom of God and the power of God are an unerring guide and a sure protection. But the apostle may be understood, by a common figure, to put Christ for his doctrine; and to mean that the gospel, which was preached in the name of a crucified Saviour, was the power of God and the wisdom of God to all believers, of whatever nation. And this both literally and figuratively; it gave them strength to endure trials and temptations, and guided them, by a way which they knew not, to purity and peace: it also disclosed the divinest wisdom of the plan devised for the

Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the

salvation of men, and the resistless power with which the execution of that plan was accomplished.

25. *Because the foolishness of God.* Or what men regard as foolishness. A fine vein of irony runs through this and the succeeding verses. The Greeks called the gospel foolishness. Grant it, says the apostle; yet even this foolishness is infinitely superior to your wisdom; and all your philosophical schemes are confounded and put to shame by it. The whole verse has been well paraphrased thus: "For the actions and dispositions of God's counsels, that which in man's opinion hath least wisdom in it, is infinitely to be preferred before all that men deem wisest; and that which men think hath nothing of strength or virtue, hath much more of power in it than anything else, it being a much more glorious act of power to raise Christ from the dead, than not to have permitted him to die, as it was a more likely way to bring any piously-disposed person to receive the doctrine of Christ, when he laid down his life for it, than if he had been the most prosperous in this world."

— *Hammond.* ¶ *Is wiser than men.* That is, than the wisdom of men. Men prided themselves on their wisdom; yet what had it accomplished for the purification of mankind from sin? Let the apostle's description of the moral state of the Gentile world, Rom. i. 28–32, which is fully verified by history, be taken as an answer. What had that wisdom discovered concerning the future condition of the human race? The wisest philosophers expressed a hope, by no means very confident, of future life and happiness. But the wisdom of God, which they accounted foolishness, had devised and revealed a plan by which immortal life and purity and happiness were secured to all men, and by which also the purifying process might commence here, and a foretaste of heaven be enjoyed through faith. ¶ *And the weakness of God.*

weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many

Either what men consider to be weakness or the slightest exertion of his power. ¶ *Is stronger than men.* Is stronger than the utmost strength of men. This is true in all respects. The least exertion of divine power can accomplish more than the united strength of mankind. He has but to withhold his sustaining power for one moment, and the whole race would perish from the earth. What is the power of man compared with that which holds the suns and planets in their places, and guides the complicated machinery of the universe! But the apostle seems here to speak particularly with reference to the salvation of men. And here, as elsewhere, the infinite superiority of divine power is manifest. Philosophers had exerted all their moral power for the reformation of men; and yet they remained in the very depth of pollution. God's power was displayed, not only by securing the final salvation of men from sin, according to his own eternal purpose, but by turning many from their sins and implanting holiness in their hearts, even in this life, through faith in that gospel which he had established by means which men considered so weak; namely, first, by the ministry of his Son, whom he permitted to be crucified, and afterwards by apostles, who were despised as destitute of worldly rank and literary culture. Weak as these instruments of God's power were considered, and weak as they actually were, except through divine aid,—they had already accomplished more in a few years, for the advancement of holiness and happiness on the earth, than the combined strength of orators, wise men, and philosophers, from the beginning of the world.

26. *For ye see your calling.* “You know the general character and condition of those who are Christians among you, that they have not been generally taken from the wise, the rich, and the learned, but from humble life. The *design* of the apostle here is to show that the gospel did not depend for its success

on human wisdom. His *argument* is, that in fact those who were blessed by it had not been of the elevated ranks of life mainly, but that God had shown his power by choosing those who were ignorant and vicious and abandoned, and by reforming and purifying their lives.”—*Barnes.* Such is the opinion of commentators generally; but there are grave reasons for doubting its correctness. The “*design*” of the apostle is correctly stated; but does the “*argument*,” as here described, accomplish that design? God's choice of the ignorant and humble, as believers, does not seem necessarily to impeach the wisdom of philosophers, as teachers. For this reason, and for another which will hereafter be mentioned, I prefer the interpretation given by *Macknight*, who paraphrases the verse thus:—“For ye see the calling of you, brethren, that not many persons remarkable for human literature, not many mighty by their offices, not many eminent for their noble birth, are chosen to call you into the fellowship of the gospel.” He adds this note: “These words (call you) I have supplied from the first clause of the verse. Our translators have supplied the words *are called*, which convey a sentiment neither true nor suitable to the apostle's design. It is not true: for even in Judea, ‘among the chief rulers many believed on him,’ John xii. 42, particularly Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Other Jews likewise of rank and learning were called; such as the nobleman whose sick son Jesus cured, John iv. 53, and Manaen, Herod's foster-brother, and Cornelius, and Gamaliel, and that great company of priests mentioned Acts vi. 7, ‘who were obedient to the faith.’ At Ephesus, many who used the arts of magic and divination were called, and who were men of learning, as appears from the number and value of their books which they burnt after embracing the gospel, Acts xix. 19. And in such numerous churches as those of Antioch, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Rome, it can

wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:

hardly be doubted that there were disciples in the higher ranks of life. There were brethren even in the emperor's family, Phil. iv. 22. In short, the precepts in the epistles, to masters to treat their slaves with humanity, and to women concerning their not adorning themselves with gold, and silver, and costly raiment, show that many wealthy persons had embraced the gospel. On the other hand, though it were true 'that not many wise men, &c., were called,' it did not suit the apostle's argument to mention it here. For surely God's not calling many of the wise, &c., joined with his calling the foolish ones of the world to believe, did not put to shame the wise, and strong, &c. Whereas, if the discourse is understood of the preachers of the gospel who were employed to convert the world, all is clear and pertinent. God chose not the learned, the mighty, and the noble ones of this world, to preach the gospel, but illiterate and weak men, and men of low birth; and by making them successful in reforming mankind, he put to shame the legislators, statesmen, and philosophers, among the heathens, and the learned scribes and doctors among the Jews, who never had done anything to purpose in that matter."

—*Macknight*. There is yet another reason for regarding this as the true interpretation. The apostle exhorts his brethren to cherish a spirit of Christian union, and rebukes them for their divisions, ver. 10-12. It is manifest that what follows, to the end of ch. iii., is designed to enforce his exhortation and rebuke. See ch. ii. 5; iii. 3-7, 21-23. It is not obvious how the fact that God had called one class of men rather than another, to become the first fruits of faith in the gospel, is specially applicable to this design. But the fact that the whole plan of salvation is the result of divine grace, and that it was communicated through the instrumentality of men regarded as foolish and weak, rather than through the wise, the mighty, and the

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God

noble, furnishes the best reason why the faith of believers "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," ch. ii. 5; and why they should not call themselves by the name of their respective teachers, inasmuch as whoever might have sowed the seed, its increase, or its efficacy, depended wholly on the divine blessing, ch. iii. 5-7. In short, if the text be applied to believers, its relation to the apostle's argument is not easily seen; but if it be applied to the preachers of the gospel, its relation is distinct, and its pertinency obvious. ¶ *Not many wise men*. Not many philosophers, or men accounted wise. The exceptions were few. Paul was thoroughly educated in the learning of the Jews, and not unskilled in Grecian philosophy. Apollos, also, is supposed to have been both learned and eloquent. Generally speaking, however, the earliest preachers of the gospel were of the unlearned class, Acts iv. 13, for the reason indicated in ch. ii. 5; and concerning the exceptions, Paul affirms that success should be ascribed wholly to God, ch. iii. 5-7. ¶ *After the flesh*. In human estimation; or, in regard to human wisdom. ¶ *Not many mighty*. Possessing great power, or influence, whether derived from social or official position, or from natural or acquired strength of mind. ¶ *Not many noble*. Of high birth. ¶ *Are called*. These words are supplied by the translators. *Call you*, would be more proper. See the first note on this verse.

27. *But God hath chosen*. The apostle is careful to recognize God, not only as the author of the blessing, but as the supreme director of the manner of its bestowment. ¶ *The foolish things of the world*. Men accounted foolish by the philosophers. Grant them to be foolish; they have accomplished more than the wise men who despise them. ¶ *To confound the wise*. To bring them to shame. By accomplishing more than had resulted from all

hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*,

their exertions, and by establishing the gospel in spite of their opposition. ¶ *And God hath chosen the weak things, &c.* Substantially the same idea is repeated, in different phraseology.

28. *And base things of the world, and things which are despised.* Not actually base and despicable; but so regarded by the lovers and worshippers of vain philosophy. ¶ *And things which are not.* A hyperbolical expression, to denote in the strongest possible manner the ability of God to accomplish his designs without the aid of human wisdom. As if not satisfied by saying that God could communicate the blessings of the gospel through the instrumentality of men who were regarded as foolish and weak, to the utter discomfiture of those who were proud of their philosophical attainments, he adds that the work is also accomplished through those who are accounted as absolutely nothing, — too insignificant to be regarded at all. “In this passage, the apostle imitated the contemptuous language in which the Greek philosophers affected to speak of the Christian preachers; yet, as he does it in irony, he thereby aggrandized them. The first preachers of the gospel, as Dr. Newton observes, on *Prophecy*, vol. i. p. 237, ‘were chiefly a few poor fishermen, of low parentage and education, of no learning or eloquence, of no reputation or authority, despised as Jews by the rest of mankind, and by the Jews as the meanest and worst of themselves. What improper instruments were these to contend with the prejudices of the world, the superstition of the people, the interests of the priests, the vanity of the philosophers, the pride of the rulers, the malice of the Jews, the learning of the Greeks, and the power of Rome!’ But the weaker the instruments who converted the world, the greater was the display of

and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are :

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is

the power of God by which they acted.” — *Macknight*. ¶ *To bring to nought.* To confound, to humble. See note on ver. 27. ¶ *Things that are.* The proper contrast to “things which are not.” The reference is to those who were proud of their own attainments, and despised others.

29. *That no flesh.* No man: no class of men. The phrase often occurs in this sense. *Matt.* xxiv. 22; *Mark* xiii. 20; *Rom.* iii. 20; *Gal.* ii. 16. ¶ *Should glory.* Or, should boast. See note on *Rom.* iv. 2. ¶ *In his presence.* Before God. The idea is, that no man in the sight of God should boast of his actions or possessions, as if they were the results of his own wisdom or exertions; but all should rather acknowledge God as the giver of all things, ver. 31. Here we have the application of the argument thus far to the subject in hand. The conversion of the Corinthian brethren had not been produced by the speculations of philosophers, but through the preaching of a despised class. Yet these preachers were but instruments in the hand of God, who was pleased to exhibit his power through them to the mortification and discomfiture of the worldly-wise and powerful; therefore they had no reason to boast of their own success, but were bound to give all the glory to God. The natural conclusion is, that their converts deserved the apostolical rebuke, for professing themselves followers of one or another of these teachers, instead of acknowledging themselves disciples of Christ, and obeying him, to the glory of God.

30. *But of him.* “That is, by his agency and power. It is not by philosophy; not from ourselves; but by his mercy.” — *Barnes*. They owed their conversion and their hopes, not to the speculations of philosophers, or the efforts of earthly dignitaries, but

made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption :

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

to the grace of God, manifested in his Son, and proclaimed by his humble followers. ¶ *Are ye.* The converted Corinthians. The phrase is emphatic, equivalent to, Ye are what ye are, that is, Christians. Whatever may be the strength of your faith, the assurance of your hopes, or the purity of your hearts and conduct, you owe it all to divine grace. ¶ *In Christ.* Through the medium or ministry of Christ. Or the phrase, "Are ye in Christ," may perhaps rather be understood to mean simply, *Ye are Christians*, as in Rom. xvi. 7. ¶ *Who of God.* By the will of God. The whole plan of salvation was devised by God, who appointed his Son as the agent and medium of its accomplishment. ¶ *Is made unto us wisdom.* "That is, he is to us the source of wisdom; it is by him that we are made wise. This cannot mean that his wisdom becomes strictly and properly ours, that it is set over to us and reckoned as our own, for that is not true. But it must mean simply that Christians have become *truly wise* by the agency, the teaching, and the work of Christ."—*Barnes.* What had never been accomplished by philosophers, in their attempts to discover the true character and to penetrate the designs of God, had been revealed by Christ, and was made known to his disciples. ¶ *Righteousness.* Freedom from sinfulness. See note on Rom. i. 17. "This declaration simply affirms that we become righteous through him, as it is affirmed that we become wise, sanctified, and redeemed, through him. But neither of the expressions determine anything as to the mode by which it is done. The leading idea of the apostle, which should never be lost sight of, is that the Greeks by their philosophy did not become truly wise, righteous, sanctified, and redeemed; but that this was accomplished through Jesus Christ. But in what way this was done, or by what process or mode, is not here stated; and it should be no more as-

sumed from this text, that we became righteous by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, than it should be that we became wise by the imputation of his wisdom, and sanctified by the imputation of his holiness. If this passage would prove one of these points, it would prove all. But as it is absurd to say that we became wise by the imputation of the personal wisdom of Christ, so this passage should not be brought to prove that we became righteous by the imputation of his righteousness. Whatever may be the truth of that doctrine, this passage does not prove it."—*Barnes.* ¶ *Sanctification.* Or holiness, as the same word is often translated. It differs from righteousness in this, that it implies the existence of holy affections, while righteousness does not necessarily imply anything more than freedom from actual sinfulness in a moral agent. Righteousness is frequently used in a larger sense, including not only freedom from transgression, but active obedience to the divine law; but when distinguished from sanctification, the distinction appears to be as before stated. See note on Rom. vi. 19. ¶ *Redemption.* Deliverance from the power of sin. The word signifies deliverance from any danger or from any evil, in a general sense: but in this place the reference is clearly to the specific evil of sinfulness. See note on Rom. iii. 24.

31. *As it is written.* Substantially, but not literally, a quotation from Jer. ix. 23, 24, applicable to the subject in hand, though originally applied to a different subject. ¶ *Glorieth.* Boasteth, or exulteth. ¶ *In the Lord.* "Not ascribing his salvation to human abilities, or learning, or rank, but entirely to God."—*Barnes.* This is generally regarded as an exhortation to personal humility; that we should not ascribe our salvation to any endowment, or acquisition, or merit, of our own, but should thankfully receive it as a free gift of divine grace. Such is unques-

CHAPTER II.

AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excel-

tionably our duty; and such and similar exhortations are frequently addressed to us in the Scripture. But in this place the apostle seems to have another design. The evil against which his argument is directed, was not so much spiritual pride in the individual members of the Corinthian church, as their divisions into contending parties, under the names of the several teachers who had instructed them. Each party naturally enough glorified him whose name they had assumed, or whose special followers they declared themselves to be, and disparaged the just claims of the others to be regarded as faithful teachers of the truth. Against this evil the apostle earnestly protested. He assured his brethren that whatever spiritual blessings they had received were not the fruit of philosophy or human wisdom, but were freely bestowed according to the good pleasure of God, and by means of his own appointment. God alone, therefore, should be glorified as the author of all blessings, and Christ alone be acknowledged as the accredited messenger of grace, the medium through whom spiritual blessings were communicated, and the only master, under God, whose name they could properly assume as their distinguishing badge. Such being the apostle's design and argument in this chapter, the exhortation in the text appears to be this: Exult not in merely human teachers, but exult in God; glorify not the creature but the Creator; honor so highly not the servants who proclaim the message of grace, but the divine Master who sent them.

CHAPTER II.

It should not be forgotten, that the division of the New Testament into chapters and verses is a work of modern date; and that such division does not necessarily imply a change of subject. In the present case, the apostle continues in the second chapter the

lency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to

discussion of the same subject which is embraced in the first, and states additional reasons why all Christians should acknowledge Jesus Christ alone as their Master according to the purpose of God, and why they should not ascribe to subordinate teachers the honor due to him alone; in short, why they should not contend with each other, as followers of different teachers, but should rather strive together with one mind for the faith of the gospel, Phil. i. 27, as revealed by Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of faith. Heb. xii. 2.

1. *And I, brethren.* Continuing the affectionate form of address to these misguided and disorderly fellow-disciples, the apostle proceeds to show that his own conduct among them had been perfectly consistent with the spirit of his admonition in the previous chapter, and that he had done nothing which could justify a suspicion that he desired to become the leader of a sect. ¶ *When I came to you.* When I preached the gospel at Corinth. See Acts ch. xviii. ¶ *Excellency of speech.* "The apostle means that nice choice and arrangement of words, that artificial rounding and disposition of periods, those rhetorical connections, transitions, and figures, and those studied tones and gestures in which, according to the Greeks, the perfection of eloquence consisted."—*Macknight.* ¶ *Or of wisdom.* Of the speculations of philosophy: of what was regarded by the Greeks as the highest attainment of the human intellect. ¶ *The testimony of God.* This may be understood to mean either the gospel itself, which testifies concerning God, his nature, character, and purposes, in regard to mankind, or the testimony concerning the same facts, given by God himself in the gospel, and authenticated by exhibitions of miraculous power, ver. 4. The result is substantially the same in either case.

2. *For I determined.* The style of

know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

preaching among the Greeks, adopted by Paul, was not accidental, but deliberately chosen. He knew their fondness for nice and subtle reasonings and for the graces of oratory. He knew their contemptuous disregard of every thing destitute of the philosophical garb. Yet he preferred to rely on the intrinsic force and power of the truth alone, and *determined* to make fair trial of a plain unvarnished proclamation of the gospel. ¶ *Not to know anything among you.* "Appear to know: in that sense the word is used by Pindar, Olymp. xiii., and it is most natural to give it that signification here."—*Doddridge.* "To act as one who knew nothing of the eloquence and wisdom of the Greeks, but only to give you the knowledge of a crucified Saviour, which was to them foolishness, ch. i. 23. So Chrysostom."—*Whitby.* ¶ *Save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* Nothing except the crucified messenger of God, with the gospel revealed through him, would the apostle present for their consideration; on this alone would he rely for their conversion. See note on ch. i. 23.

3. *And I was with you.* He preached at Corinth "a year and six months." Acts xviii. 11. ¶ *In weakness.* Although Paul duly appreciated the dignity of apostleship, Rom. xi. 13, as a man, he was humble and fully conscious of his weakness. He had never forgotten the lesson which he learned on the way to Damascus, Acts ix. 1-9. He was willing to confess that of himself he could do nothing; but that God alone could crown any labor with success, ch. iii. 5, 6. He may perhaps refer also to some bodily weakness or imperfection of speech. See 2 Cor. x. 10; xii. 7-9. ¶ *And in fear and in much trembling.* Knowing the bitter hatred of the Jews towards the gospel, and the contempt of the Greeks for all which did not

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

come up to their standard of wisdom and eloquence, it was natural that the apostle should be anxious and apprehensive of failure in his effort to establish the gospel at Corinth. He did not profess to foresee the immediate result of his preaching. The final success of the gospel and its triumph over all opposition, he did not doubt; but whether particular individuals would embrace it readily, or whether they would reject it and persecute its preachers, he knew not. It was while he was in this state of anxiety, that the Lord said unto him in a vision, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." Acts xviii. 9, 10. Would that all the preachers of the gospel were as humble in their estimate of their own strength, and as reliant on the power of God for success.

4. *And my speech, and my preaching.* All my verbal communications, whether private or public. ¶ *Was not with enticing words of man's wisdom.* Not with the persuasive arts of oratory, or a display of philosophical learning, in which the Greeks so much delighted. ¶ *But in demonstration.* Or, *proof.* This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament; but the corresponding verb occurs four times, Acts ii. 22; xxv. 7; 1 Cor. iv. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 4; in all which cases it indicates to exhibit, to make manifest, to prove. The proof on which the apostle relied to carry conviction to the hearts of his hearers, consisted not in wisdom or grace of speech, but on that which he immediately mentions. ¶ *Of the spirit.* That is, of the divine spirit. The influence of this spirit in the hearts of men furnishes a convincing proof that the gospel is from God. The gifts of the spirit, such as the gifts of tongues, and the like, were bestowed on believers in the earliest age of the

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

church. The apostles were so endowed. Acts ii. 1-4. Other converts received a similar endowment, Acts x. 44-46. Some, at least, among the Christians at Corinth, had received the same gift, as is evident from the admonitions in ch. xiv. To such and similar influences of the spirit, as proof of the gospel, reference is made in this place. ¶ *And of power.* Of divine power, especially the miraculous exhibition of that power. To such power our Lord appealed in proof of his sonship and authority, John x. 37, 38: and God manifested his power for that purpose, Acts ii. 22; Rom. i. 4. By the same power he authenticated the mission of the apostles, Mark xvi. 20; Acts iii. 6-8; viii. 6, 7; xix. 11, 12. Although, in the brief account of Paul's ministry at Corinth, recorded in Acts ch. xviii., there is no special mention made of miracles performed by him, yet it is reasonable to believe that he there exhibited this proof that he was a servant of Christ; for such was his general custom in the cities which he visited, and to such manifestation of divine power he seems to refer in this place. See 2 Cor. xii. 12.

5. *That your faith.* Your belief in the gospel, the foundation of the Christian religion. ¶ *Should not stand in the wisdom of men.* Should not rest upon the speculations of philosophy. "God intended to furnish you a firm and solid demonstration that the religion which you embraced was from him; and this could not be, if its preaching had been attended with the graces of eloquence, or the abstractions of refined metaphysical reasonings. It would then appear to rest on human wisdom."—*Barnes.* ¶ *But in the power of God.* It is confirmed by the manifestation of divine power, and on that your faith may securely rest. See note on ver. 4. By this appeal to the character of his own preaching, ver. 1-4, the apostle accomplishes a double object. (1.) He demonstrates the divine origin of the gospel, by showing that,

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this

through the power of God, it had done what philosophy had for ages vainly attempted: it had disclosed the true character of God, it had excited new and glorious hopes, it had exerted a purifying influence on the heart, and it had brought life and immortality to light. (2.) He enforces his admonition against divisions and contentions, by declaring that the success which attended the ministry was not to be attributed to his own wisdom or eloquence, but solely to the purpose, the influence, and the power of God; and the same is true, though he modestly refrains from saying it, in regard to the success which attended the ministry of others. If, then, the believing brethren were converted by the divine spirit, not by human wisdom, by the truth of the gospel, enforced by divine power, not by the devices of human wisdom, or by the graces of eloquence, it was absurd that they should profess themselves to be followers of individual teachers, to the exclusion of the common Lord and Master of all, or attempt to justify their dissensions by an appeal to the authority of one teacher against another, as if the same Master would teach different and conflicting doctrines through his several servants.

6. *Howbeit, we speak wisdom.* Although the gospel which we preach is despised by some as foolishness, nevertheless it is true wisdom; and although it be not human wisdom, yet it is divine wisdom. ¶ *Among them that are perfect.* "Among those who are ripe in knowledge."—*Conybeare.* The reference certainly is not to perfection in holiness; for this character was not possessed by any of his hearers. The same appellation is given to Christians, Phil. iii. 15, and manifestly refers to those who had attained a competent knowledge of the gospel so that they were capable of understanding and appreciating the truth. By them who thus understood the gospel, it was perceived to be the highest wisdom;

world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought :

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the

while those who understood it not regarded it as foolishness. As the apostle uses the word *mystery* in ver. 7, it is not improbable that he may have had reference to the mysteries which formed such a prominent feature both in the philosophy and in the religious rites of the Greeks. "The fully initiated into the heathen mysteries were named *perfect*, because these mysteries in their whole extent were discovered to them. The apostle, Heb. vi. 1, calls the deep doctrines of the gospel *perfection*, and here surnames the persons who had these doctrines discovered to them *perfect men*, because in the following verse he terms the gospel a *mystery*. In other passages, however, he uses the word *perfect* to denote persons fully instructed in the doctrines of the gospel, where no allusion to the heathen mysteries is intended."—*Macknight*. ¶ *Not the wisdom of this world*. Not the philosophy of men, which was so highly valued, and which is so frequently mentioned in this and the preceding chapter. The gospel is the true wisdom, not the false; the wisdom of God, not of men. ¶ *Nor of the princes of this world*. The apostle is supposed to refer here to the Jewish rulers. See note on ver. 8. There were many Jews at Corinth, who were even more violent than the Greeks in their opposition to the gospel. They regarded themselves as the special favorites of Heaven, and in a certain sense as the proprietors or princes of the world. It was not their wisdom which the apostle preached; for they neither devised it, nor accepted it when communicated to them. ¶ *That come to nought*. "Whose greatness will soon be nothing. Literally, passing away into nothingness."—*Conybear*. The present existence of men, with all its pomp, and dignity, and glory, is fleeting and perishable. God alone is self-existent and eternal. The wisest schemes of men are liable to be frustrated by unforeseen influences. The purposes of God, guided by infinite wisdom, cannot fail of full and exact accomplishment.

7. *But we speak the wisdom of God*. We preach a doctrine bearing the signet of divine wisdom, disclosing the purpose of God concerning men. As contrasted here with the wisdom of men, it seems to refer especially to the method of saving men from their sins, revealed in the gospel, in contradistinction to the various schemes devised by human wisdom for the moral improvement of men. ¶ *In a mystery, even the hidden wisdom*. "Which was hidden in a mystery."—*Macknight*. Styled a mystery because it had long remained hidden. "The words *even* and *wisdom* in this translation have been supplied by our translators; and the sense would be more perspicuous if they were omitted, and the translation should be literally made. 'We proclaim the divine wisdom, hidden in a mystery.' The apostle does not say that their preaching was mysterious, nor that their doctrine was unintelligible, but he refers to the fact that this wisdom had been hidden in a mystery from men until that time, but was then revealed by the gospel."—*Barnes*. By the use of this term, it is supposed that the apostle intended to attract the attention of the learned Greeks, much of whose wisdom was enveloped in mysteries and made known only to the initiated; at the same time assuring them that the gospel was more valuable than their most occult and sacred mysteries, by as much as divine wisdom excelleth that which is human. The same term, however, is elsewhere used to signify gospel truth, where no special reference to the heathen mysteries is discoverable. See notes on Matt. xiii. 11; Rom. xi. 25. ¶ *Which God ordained before the world*. Or, before the ages; from ancient times. So much the natural force of the original words imply; but even more is probably denoted in this place, for we cannot conceive of a commencement of design or purpose in an unchangeable God. The apostle never loses sight of the great fact that salvation

hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory;

is the gift of God, the fruit of divine grace alone, irrespective of human merit. Before God, all men are sinful, and incapable of establishing any claim on him for a recompense of reward. Even the blessings of this life are so much beyond our deserts, that they are to be gratefully accepted as gifts, not as rewards: much more, salvation from sin and the bestowment of immortal blessedness in the life which is to come. These blessings, revealed in the gospel, were ordained or purposed by God before he subjected the creation to vanity. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." Eph. i. 9, 10. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. ¶ *Unto our glory.* Some commentators suppose the apostle to refer to the glory or honor conferred on the messengers of the gospel, as preachers of such a glorious doctrine. But it seems more reasonable to understand him as speaking of the glory which admission to the privileges of the gospel confers on all believers here, and more especially of that exceeding glory which shall crown the whole human family as the final result of God's eternal purpose.

8. *Which none of the princes of this world knew.* None of the Jewish rulers understood this mystery of the divine purpose. See note on ver. 6. "If it be objected that there is little ground to think that St. Paul, by the wisdom he disowns, should mean that of his own nation, which the Greeks of Corinth (whom he was writing to) had little acquaintance with, and had very little esteem for;

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not

I reply that to understand this right and the pertinency of it, we must remember, that the great design of St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, was to take them off from the respect and esteem that many of them had for a false apostle that was got in among them, and had there raised a faction against St. Paul. This pretended apostle, it is plain from 2 Cor. xi. 22, was a Jew, and as it seems, 2 Cor. v. 16, 17, valued himself upon that account, and possibly boasted himself to be a man of note, either by birth, or alliance, or place, or learning, among that people, who counted themselves the holy and illuminated people of God; and therefore to have a right to sway among these new heathen converts. To obviate this claim of his to any authority, St. Paul here tells the Corinthians that the wisdom and learning of the Jewish nation led them not into the knowledge of the wisdom of God, — evident in this, that it was their rulers and rabbies, who, stiffly adhering to the notions and prejudices of their nation, had crucified Jesus, the Lord of glory, and were now themselves, with their state and religion, upon the point to be swept away and abolished." — *Locke.* ¶ *For had they known it.* Had they rightly understood the gospel, the revelation of divine wisdom. Had they fully comprehended the purpose of God, as proclaimed by his son. Had they realized that Jesus was the true Messiah, promised in the Old Testament. ¶ *They would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* Or, the glorious Lord; a common Hebraism. It is absurd to suppose that the Jews would have crucified their Messiah, if they had distinctly recognized him. The nation had long and anxiously desired his appearance, and expected him to communicate rich blessings. They were ready to hail his advent, and to show him all honor. See Matt. xxi. 9; John vi. 15. But when Jesus came, they did not recognize him as

have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye

hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which

the Messiah, because his character did not correspond with their expectations. They expected an earthly monarch; he declared that his kingdom was not of this world. John xviii. 36. They expected earthly blessings, — riches, power, and dominion over other nations; he offered them only spiritual blessings. Hence, although he spake as never man spake, and performed miracles which no man could perform without divine assistance, John iii. 2; vii. 46, they regarded him as an impostor; they could not abandon their extravagant expectations, and would not submit to the indignity of being taught by a despised Nazarene. They crucified him, through ignorance of his true character. However unnecessary and unreasonable their ignorance may appear, yet it was acknowledged to exist, both by our Lord and by his apostles. While on the cross Jesus prayed for their forgiveness, on the express ground that they did not understand what they were doing. Luke xxiii. 34. And Peter, when reproving the Jews for their wickedness, in denying “the Holy One and the Just,” and killing “the Prince of Life,” of which wickedness they had not yet repented, says, “I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” Acts iii. 17. Paul testified in like manner in the synagogue of the Jews at Antioch. “They that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.” Acts xiii. 27. Of the Jews, therefore, as well as of the Greeks, the apostle might well say that by their wisdom they knew not God, ch. i. 21; that the doctrines which he preached were not devised by their wisdom, ver. 6; and that the teachers of such wisdom were not worthy of any special honor.

9. *But as it is written.* The reference is understood to be Isa. lxiv.

4; but the quotation is not literal. ¶ *Eye hath not seen, &c.* By the three forms of expression here used, the apostle expresses the general truth, that men had not clearly perceived and understood the things revealed in the gospel. Before the advent of Christ, the utmost stretch of human wisdom had never been able to discover, or even to conceive, the glory of those blessings which he revealed. ¶ *The things which God hath prepared.* Many commentators restrict the meaning of this phrase to the blessings enjoyed on earth by believers; but it seems to me to include also the blessings of the future life. The form of expression certainly indicates the preparation of blessings yet future; and the revelation of these blessings, in ver. 10, indicates something different from their actual bestowment and enjoyment. In my judgment, the interpretation given by *Macknight* is natural and correct. “The meaning is, that those blessings which God hath prepared for them who love him, and which in the gospel he hath discovered, and promised to bestow on them, are so great, that nothing like them hath ever been beheld by men or reported to them. Nay, the mind of man, by its own powers, is not able to form the most distant idea of them.” To this interpretation, *Whitby* objects that “the apostle adds, in the following verse, ‘But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit;’ whereas our future happiness is not yet revealed, saith St. John. 1 John iii. 2.” It will be seen, however, on inspection, that John does not deny the fact that future happiness is revealed, but only declares that the precise form and character of that happiness is not yet known. Paul does not describe the shape of the spiritual body. But no Christian doubts that he preached the resurrection of the dead in a spiritual body, as a truth distinctly revealed. The objection stated by *Barnes* is somewhat differ-

God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed

ent: "The declaration in ver. 10 is conclusive proof that Paul does not refer to the happiness of heaven. He there says that God *has* revealed these things to Christians by his spirit. But if already revealed, assuredly it does not refer to that which is yet to come." But is revelation confined to the past and present? Has it no relation to the future? How then are we to understand the commencement of the Apocalypse?—"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." Rev. i. 1. Were not things revealed which were "yet to come?" If not, why is this styled a "revelation." The idea expressed by the apostle seems plain enough. He had been contrasting human wisdom with divine wisdom. What human wisdom had vainly attempted, divine wisdom had accomplished. What human reason had failed to discover, divine wisdom had revealed; and in this category are placed "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Not only were Christians partakers of present joys to which the unconverted Greeks and Jews were equally strangers; but they had received assurance, by revelation, of blessings in the future life, richer and more abundant than had been discovered or conceived by men, before the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¶ *For them that love him.* Or, for them loving him. Whether this should be regarded as a limitation of the divine blessing, depends on the question whether all men shall or shall not finally love God. If they shall not, they are not included here; otherwise, they are. What is revealed on this subject may be more properly discussed elsewhere. I only remark here, that if God loves all men, there is apostolical authority for believing that when they become fully conscious of the fact, they will also love him. 1 John iv. 19.

10. *But God hath revealed them unto*

them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

us. We have not obtained a knowledge of these blessings by means of human wisdom, but by revelation from God, through Jesus Christ. In like manner Paul says to the Galatians, "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. i. 11, 12. Paul and his associates, having received this revelation directly from the Lord Jesus, and having obtained the gift of the spirit which guided them into all truth, John xvi. 13, were competent to instruct others; and the influence of the spirit was communicated to all who received the truth into good and honest hearts. Hence all Christians, in all ages, may regard these truths as revealed also unto themselves, and may rejoice in anticipation of the blessings revealed. ¶ *By his spirit.* By the spirit of God we are not to understand a separate personality in the Godhead, any more than a personality separate from man by the "spirit of man," ver. 11. See notes on John xiv. 16, 17, 26. The spirit of God here indicates that divine energy which was manifested in his Son; the active principle which was exhibited to men in the person, the character, and the teachings of the Son of God, and which is felt in the heart of the Christian bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. Rom. viii. 16. ¶ *For the spirit searcheth all things.* God is omniscient. Nothing is hidden from his sight, whether, in respect to us, past, present, or future. The word *search* "does not fully express the force of the original. It means, to search accurately, diligently, so as fully to understand; such profound research as to have thorough knowledge. Here it means, that the Holy Spirit has an intimate knowledge of all things. It is not to be supposed that he searches or inquires as men do who are ignorant; but that he has

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God know-

eth no man but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the

an intimate and profound knowledge, such as is usually the result of a close and accurate search."—*Barnes*. ¶ *Yea, the deep things of God.* All the designs and purposes of God, even those which had been hidden from all former generations, but were now revealed through Christ. Even as the spirit of man knoweth his own purposes, so the spirit of God knoweth the purposes of God. Those purposes are unchangeable, and therefore positively known. If, as some suppose, the divine purposes were dependent on certain contingencies not clearly understood, it is not easily conceivable how such positive knowledge could exist. But depending for accomplishment, as they do, solely upon the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," they exist in the divine mind, or are contemplated by the spirit of God, as absolute truth. See notes on Acts iii. 23; xv. 18.

11. *For what man knoweth, &c.* The apostle here illustrates the idea before expressed, namely, that the wisdom of men could never find out God to perfection, but that God alone had revealed himself by his Son, through the gospel. This he does by an appeal to the well-known fact, that no man fully knows the mind or the designs of another. The spirit or mind of each man knows his own purposes; but no one else can know them, except so far as he manifests them by word or deed. Even so it was impossible for philosophers and wise men and scribes, to know accurately, and of course impossible for them to teach distinctly, the character and purposes of God, which were known unto himself only, until he communicated knowledge by revelation. The idea is similar to that expressed in Matt. xi. 27: "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." This furnishes a good reason why Paul should preach the "wisdom of God"

rather than the "wisdom of this world," ver. 6, 7, and also why Christians should honor Christ as the "author of faith," the original accredited messenger of the "only wise God," instead of professing themselves to be followers of any human teacher, as if by his own wisdom he had discovered the truths proclaimed by him. This last idea, it should be remembered, runs through the first three chapters of this Epistle; and all the arguments used bear more or less directly on this particular point. ¶ *The things of a man.* The secrets of the heart. The thoughts, desires, purposes, plans of action. ¶ *Save the spirit of man which is in him.* That is, himself, his own mind. In this phrase there is probably a reference to the ancient opinion concerning the three-fold nature of man, — body, soul, and spirit. See ch. vi. 20; Heb. iv. 12. ¶ *Even so.* An emphatic form of expression, denoting the exactness of the comparison. ¶ *The things of God knoweth no man.* That is, without the assistance of revelation. What God has revealed, men may know and understand; but by the efforts of human reason alone, they cannot penetrate the divine purposes. ¶ *But the spirit of God.* He alone understands and is able to reveal his own character and designs. See note on ver. 10.

12. *Now we have received.* Paul here speaks especially of himself and his fellow-apostles, who had received the truth "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." But the declaration is also true, in a qualified sense, concerning all Christians, to whom the same revelation has been transmitted. ¶ *Not the spirit of the world.* Spirit is here used as an equivalent of wisdom in ver. 4-6. The phraseology is changed, to correspond with the language in ver. 11. The meaning is, we have not received the doctrines which the human intellect has devised, and which in this world is accounted the highest

Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we

wisdom. We are not guided by the precepts of philosophy, so highly esteemed by the Greeks. Perhaps the traditions of the Jews may also be included. ¶ *But the spirit which is of God.* The wisdom or truth revealed by the spirit of God. See ver. 7, 10. ¶ *That we might know the things, &c.* We have been instructed, not by men, but by God, that we might have knowledge of those spiritual blessings provided by God for his children. Such knowledge is not attained by philosophical investigation, but by revelation alone. ¶ *Freely given to us of God.* Spiritual blessings are not purchased, but freely bestowed. This fact the apostle is careful to keep prominently in sight at all times. See Rom. viii. 32.

13. *Which things also we speak.* Paul preached the gospel of grace as it was revealed to him. Gal. i. 11, 12. This, and this only, was the theme of apostolical preaching. ¶ *Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth.* Not in the philosophical dress, and with the elegance of rhetoric, which the Greeks so highly esteem, ver. 1, 2. He did not attempt to captivate them by the arts of eloquence, nor to win their assent even to the important truths which he delivered, by addressing himself to their fancy in the flowery language which they were accustomed to hear from their popular orators. ¶ *But which the Holy Ghost teacheth.* In plain unvarnished language, in contrast with the "excellency of speech," ver. 1, in use by the learned professors of wisdom. Our Lord early gave assurance to his disciples that they should receive divine guidance and assistance. Matt. x. 19, 20. The apostles professed to be guided by the spirit in their ministrations. Not only did they claim that the great truths of the gospel were supernaturally revealed, but they claimed also that in announc-

speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

ing these truths they were supernaturally directed. Verbal inspiration is sometimes denied, on the ground that various styles of language are discoverable in the writings of the several evangelists and apostles. But it should be remembered that "as often as the apostles declared the doctrines of the gospel, the spirit presented these doctrines to their minds clothed in their own language; which indeed is the only way in which the doctrines of the gospel could be presented to their minds. For men are so accustomed to connect ideas with words, that they always think in words. Wherefore, though the language in which the apostles delivered the doctrines of the gospel was really suggested to them by the spirit, it was properly their own style of language."—*Macknight.* Moreover, if God inspired the apostles as to the substance of what they should preach, it was doubtless for the purpose of communicating knowledge to those who should hear; and it is certainly reasonable to suppose that he would not permit words to be used which would obscure the doctrines taught, or inaccurately express them. Such supervision does not essentially differ from verbal inspiration. ¶ *Comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* "Explaining spiritual things to spiritual men."—*Cosmybear.* So also Pearce, Clarke, and others. "Speaking spiritual things to spiritual men."—*Le Clerc.* "Explaining spiritual things in spiritual words."—*Imp. Ver. and Macknight.* This expression has been very variously interpreted, and is very difficult of explanation. The word rendered *comparing* means properly to collect, join, mingle, unite together; then to separate or distinguish parts of things and to unite them into one; then to judge of the qualities of objects by carefully separating or distinguishing; then to compare for the purpose of judging, &c. As it means

14 But the natural man receiv- | eth not the things of the Spirit

to compare one thing with another for the purpose of explaining its nature, it comes to signify to *interpret*, to *explain*; and in this sense it is often used in the LXX. In this sense the word is doubtless used here, and is to be interpreted in the sense of explaining, unfolding. There is no reason, either in the word here used, or in the argument of the apostle, why the sense of *comparing* should be retained." — *Barnes*. "The original word is rightly translated *interpreting* or *explaining*; being used by the LXX, to denote the interpretation of dreams, Gen. xl. 16, 22; xli. 12, 13, 15; Dan. ii. 4; v. 7, 12." — *Macknight*. ¶ *Spiritual things*. That is, the things revealed by the spirit, ver. 10. The reference is not so much to things spiritual, in opposition to things of the flesh, or intellectual, in opposition to material things, as to things revealed by the spirit of God, in opposition to the attainments of mere human reason; in a word, to the truths of the gospel.

14. *But the natural man*. The word ψυχικός, here translated *natural*, occurs in only five other places in the New Testament; ch. xv. 44 (twice), 46; Jas. iii. 15; Jude 19. In the last two places it is translated *sensual*. It is worthy of observation that this adjective is derived from ψυχή, generally translated *soul*, or *life*. See note on Matt. xvi. 26. It appears to denote animal life, common to men and the lower orders of animals, in contradistinction to spiritual life. "The doctrine that pervades this whole argument of St. Paul, and of which every religious man must have had experience, is, that there is a divine element in the human soul, an intuitive spirit, which, when kept pure and exercised, and not clogged or dimmed by sinful passions, recognizes kindred goodness by a divine affinity, and is the immediate revealer of God. You will observe now, in the 14th and 15th verses, he speaks of the natural man and of the spiritual man; by the one, meaning the worldly understanding, the earthly mind, taste, sensibilities, and passions; and by

the other, the estimates and discernments of the diviner mind of the spirit, that reveals God. Among the writers and philosophers of St. Paul's age, there was a well-known division of the whole nature of man into the flesh, the soul, and the spirit. The flesh was the bodily nature, with all the desires and tendencies that arise out of it; the soul was the common understanding, the judgment, the æsthetic and the logical faculties, applied to the various subjects with which mere sense and intellect are conversant; the spirit was transcendental, that portion of man's nature properly divine; it had an inward intuition of God. The spirit was the voice and prompting of God within us. It could have no connection with evil, and nothing evil could proceed from it; but by the predominance of the senses and of the lower powers of the soul, its activity could be depressed, or altogether suspended." — *Thom*. But however true this may be in regard to the ancient philosophers, it should be remembered that such a distinction between the soul and the spirit is by no means uniform in the New Testament. The word πνεῦμα is sometimes used to denote animal life; Luke viii. 55; John xix. 30; Rev. xiii. 15; while ψυχή is used to denote animal life more frequently than in any other sense, but also to denote the intellect, the emotional nature, and the whole person. The following paraphrase of ver. 14, 15, expresses substantially the opinion of many commentators. "But mere unassisted reason could never discern these things. He only who is assisted by God's spirit can discern them. The mere natural man continually makes false judgments both of men and things." — *Gilpin*. To the same effect substantially is this: "The animal man and the spiritual man are opposed by St. Paul in ver. 14, 15, the one signifying a man that has no higher principles to build on than those of natural reason; the other a man that founds his faith and religion on divine revelation. This is

of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know

them, because they are spiritually discerned.

what appears to be meant by natural, or rather animal man and spiritual, as they stand opposed in these two verses." — *Locke*. Another opinion is, that the word *natural* "here evidently denotes those who are under the influence of the senses; who are governed by the passions and the animal appetites and natural desires, and who are uninfluenced by the spirit of God. And it may be observed that this was the case with the great mass of the heathen world, even including the philosophers." — *Barnes*. According to this interpretation, the contrast here between the natural man and the spiritual man is similar to that between "carnally minded" and "spiritually minded," in Rom. viii. 6; and under other circumstances I should not hesitate to adopt it. But the former interpretation is more consistent with the general subject of the apostle's discourse in this place, namely, that the doctrines which he preached had never been discovered by the natural unassisted reason of the wisest men, whether Greeks or Jews, but were revealed by the spirit of God through Jesus Christ. The moral condition of men, as righteous or wicked, or their spiritual condition, as converted or unconverted, is not here the topic discussed; but the contrast is between the highest attainments of natural reason and the revelation of the wisdom of God. I prefer, therefore, to regard these two verses as similar to ch. i. 23, 24, in signification. ¶ *Receiveth not*. Accepteth not, as in 2 Cor. viii. 17; xi. 4, where the same word occurs; doth not embrace the revealed gospel as the truth. "Believeth not the matters revealed by the spirit of God." — *Macknight*. "Rejects the teaching of God's spirit." — *Conybeare*. ¶ *The things of the spirit of God*. The doctrines revealed by the spirit. See note on ver. 10. ¶ *For they are foolishness unto him*. See note on ch. i. 18. ¶ *Neither can he know them*. "He cannot know them, namely, by that

wisdom which alone he will be conducted by, because they are spiritually discerned, or by the revelation of the spirit; for, being mysteries, they are not knowable by human reason, till God is pleased to reveal them. So ver. 9, 10, 11, 16. Note, also, that the apostle doth not here discourse of the inability of a heathen to understand the sense of any revelations discovered to him; for how, then, are they to be discovered to him? but only of his inability to find out and originally come to the knowledge of them by the mere light of reason; and from the denial of this he infers the necessity of a supernatural revelation, that the hidden wisdom of God may be made known to the world. Nor doth he say that the natural man cannot understand these revelations when discovered to him, because he wants further means to do it; but only that he cannot know them before they are discovered by the revelation of the spirit; and that he will not then receive them, because they are not taught him, as the wisdom of the world is, by deductions from principles of human reason. The Jew, saith he, admits of revelation, and so he only doth *require a sign* to prove this revelation; but the Greek seeks after human wisdom, and because he finds not that in our way of preaching, he will not receive the revelation, though it be confirmed by demonstration of the spirit and of power." — *Whitby*. ¶ *Because they are spiritually discerned, or examined, or judged*. See note on ver. 15. "Because it is by the studying of divine revelation alone that we can attain the knowledge of them." — *Locke*. A two-fold operation of the divine spirit is recognized; the gospel which human wisdom did not and could not devise, is revealed by the spirit; and whosoever diligently studies it, with a sincere desire to understand its meaning, and a reverent willingness to embrace the truth, the spirit will keep his infirmities, and direct him what to be-

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the

lieve, as well as what to pray for. John xvi. 13; Rom. viii. 26.

15. *He that is spiritual.* Namely, "A person whose spiritual faculties, his reason and conscience, are not biased by his animal nature, but have their due ascendant, and who entertains a just sense of the authority of revelation in matters pertaining to God, and being sincerely desirous to know the truth, is assisted in his inquiries by the spirit. Such a spiritual man, and he only, is able to judge properly of the things revealed by the spirit of God."—*Macknight.* ¶ *Judgeth all things.* Or examines, or discerns the nature of all things here spoken of; namely, the things revealed by the spirit. The word here translated *judgeth* occurs ten times in this Epistle, and is translated *discerned* once, ver. 14, *examine* once, *asking questions* twice, and *judgeth* or *judged* six times. It is used also by Luke once in his gospel and five times in the Acts of the Apostles; in all the places, it is translated *examined* except in Acts xvii. 11, where the translation is *searched*. The word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The idea of ascertaining the true nature and character of an object by diligent inquiry is prominent in all cases of its use. ¶ *Yet he himself is judged of no man.* Or, by no man; that is, by no man who is not spiritual. The accuracy of his knowledge of divine things, the strength and stability of his faith, the purity of his desires, the brightness of his glorious hopes, the fervency of his gratitude to God, cannot be clearly discerned by one who rejects revelation and is guided only by reason and philosophy.

16. *For who hath known the mind of the Lord?* See note on Rom. xi. 34. ¶ *That he may instruct him.* Generally understood as an assertion that none can instruct God. Some, however, understand the idea to be that no man guided by reason alone can so know

mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

the mind of the Lord as to be able to instruct the spiritual man, who is guided by revelation. ¶ *But we have the mind of Christ.* We, the apostles, have been instructed by revelation through Christ. We have embraced the truth taught by him. We have the same views of the divine character and purposes which he had, and which he disclosed to us.

CHAPTER III.

The connection of this chapter with the preceding is very intimate. The same general subject is discussed, with some diversity of argument and illustration. The gross impropriety of divisions and contentions in the church, and of honoring one or another subordinate teacher rather than the Great Teacher of all, is further exhibited. And, in self-defence, against those who questioned his authority, or faithfulness, or thoroughness, as a religious teacher, Paul claims to be "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," while he confesses that of himself he is "nothing." 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11. He commences the second chapter by a declaration of what he *had* preached at Corinth, and how he *had* preached. He commences this by declaring why he *had not* preached otherwise. "From what is said in this chapter, it appears that the false teacher had represented St. Paul either as ignorant or unfaithful, because he had not fully instructed the Corinthians before his departure. The same teacher had also boasted concerning himself, that he had given them complete instructions. The confutation of these calumnies the apostle with great propriety introduced, after having in the former chapter discoursed largely concerning the perfect knowledge of the gospel given to the apostles by the spirit. Wherefore, having in that chapter observed that animal men receive not the things

CHAPTER III.

AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto

of the spirit of God, he began this chapter with telling the Corinthians that though he was an apostle fully instructed, he could not, during his abode with them, speak to them as spiritual, but as to fleshly or weak persons, even as to babes in Christianity, ver. 1. This was a severe blow to the pride of the Greeks. Notwithstanding their boasted proficiency in the sciences, they were fleshly or weak men, and babes in religious matters. That the Corinthians were still fleshly was evident from the strifes and divisions which were among them, on account of the particular teachers to whom they had attached themselves, ver. 3. For one said, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, ver. 4." — *Macknight*. Such being the condition of the Corinthian church, and such the evils Paul desired to correct, he proceeds to justify the manner and matter of his own preaching, and to condemn the divisions and contentions occasioned by those who opposed him.

1. *And I, brethren*. Even while pointing out their imperfections and rebuking their evil practices, the apostle does not hesitate to address the Corinthians as brethren. See ch. ii. 1. ¶ *Could not speak unto you as spiritual*. Not that he labored under any personal disability, but their condition rendered it unsuitable that he should so address them. He had declared himself able to "speak wisdom among them that are perfect," ch. ii. 6; and in ch. ii. 16 had asserted that he had the "mind of Christ," or was fully instructed. It appears probable that some of his opposers alleged it as an evidence of his incapacity or unfaithfulness, that he had taught only the rudiments of Christianity, to which they had added other instructions, right or wrong, ver. 13, 14; in consequence of which they were willing to be acknowledged as leaders. Hence the origin of the parties into which the church was broken; some admir-

spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hith-

ing the apparent wisdom of one teacher; others the eloquent manner in which another announced his theories; and so of the rest. The fact that he had not yet communicated to them all "the deep things of God," ch. ii. 10, but had only preached the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, he does not deny. But admitting the fact, he assigns the reason for it; namely, that his hearers were not sufficiently spiritual to receive the higher instruction which belonged only to the "perfect." ¶ *Spiritual, but as unto carnal*. In ch. ii. 14, 15, the apostle contrasts the spiritual man with the natural man. Here a different word is used, and the contrast is between the spiritual man and the carnal or fleshly man. The same word occurs 1 Pet. ii. 11, and is there translated *fleshly*. See note on Rom. vii. 14, where the same word is found. Some commentators understand both contrasts alike. I regard them as different; not only because different words are used, but because different results are predicated from the two conditions described. The natural man, mentioned in ch. ii., relying wholly on reason and rejecting revelation, regarded the preaching of the cross as foolishness, and would not receive or accept even the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The persons here addressed had accepted those doctrines, and were, so far, spiritual. They no longer trusted alone in the speculations of philosophy, but rejoiced in the truths of revelation. Yet they were carnal, because they were still under the dominion of their lusts and passions, as is declared in ver. 3. Rejection of the gospel as unwise or unphilosophical, the characteristic of the *natural* man, is very different from the characteristic here given of the *carnal* man, namely, belief in the gospel, accompanied by envying and strife concerning the honor of leadership. The

erto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

one indicates intellectual, the other moral obliquity. The epithet carnal "is applied here to Christians; but to those who have much of the remains of corruption, and who are imperfectly acquainted with the nature of religion, babes in Christ. It denotes these who still evinced the feelings and views which pertain to the flesh in these unhappy contentions and strifes and divisions." — *Barnes*. Such envying and strife are among the works ascribed to the *flesh*, or the fleshly or carnal mind, Gal. v. 20, 21. ¶ *As unto babes in Christ*. "In the first infancy of your growth in Christ." — *Conybeare*. Recently born into the kingdom of Christ, and not yet under its influences to any considerable extent. The warfare between flesh and spirit had just commenced, and the flesh was yet predominant. Or, as others understand the phrase, those who had only commenced the attainment of revealed truth, and were still unable to comprehend its sublimest mysteries. The former regard these words as explanatory of the preceding phrase; the latter regard them as additional, descriptive of another obstacle to the full reception of "the deep things of God."

2. *I have fed you with milk*. Having styled them babes, the apostle pursues the metaphor and describes the spiritual nourishment he had imparted to them as *milk*, the common food of infants. He manifestly refers to those plain fundamental truths of Christianity which he had preached to them. See ch. ii. 2, 4. ¶ *And not with meat*. Under the same metaphor the apostle here refers to the more abstruse doctrines of the gospel, "the deep things of God," which the babe in Christ is unable to appreciate, and which the maturest Christian, after a lifetime of careful study and meditation, and an earnest warfare against all fleshly impediments, is conscious that he very imperfectly comprehends. Rom. xi. 33-36. ¶ *For hitherto*. Up to the time when I preached to you. ¶ *Ye were not able to bear it*. That is,

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you

to bear such strong food. The last three words were supplied by the translators. The idea is, that they were not capable of fully understanding the higher doctrines, while they had made such slight progress in the more simple lessons. ¶ *Neither yet now are ye able*. The reason is assigned in the next verse. The same obstacle continued to exist. And it may be here remarked, that, in accordance with this opinion of the incapacity of the Corinthians to receive the strongest food, Paul refrains in this Epistle from the discussion of many abstruse doctrines which are unfolded in the Epistle to the Romans. "One great difficulty remains scarce observed by any interpreter excepting *Crellius*, namely, how the same Corinthians could be such babes in Christ, and have such need of milk and not of meat, and yet be enriched in all utterance and knowledge, ch. i. 5. — I answer, that these encomiums must be restrained to some few of them who were their extraordinary church officers, and enjoyed this faith and knowledge for the instruction of the rest; and then, notwithstanding this, it may be true that the apostle could not write to the generality of them as such, but rather as to babes in Christ. Or (2) this faith, utterance, and knowledge, must be restrained to the gift of miracles, of tongues, and the interpretation of them, which might be given for the confirmation of the gospel and the good of others, to them who were not spiritual in the best sense, but of very small proficiency in the saving fruits of the good spirit. Hence we find them puffed up on the account of these gifts, envying others who had them in a higher measure, and abusing them to vain ostentation and confusion in the church, and not to edification; which things sufficiently evidence that they were but babes in Christ." — *Whitby*.

3. *For ye are yet carnal*. This was the reason why the apostle first fed them with milk instead of meat, and why he continued so to feed them.

envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am

The evidence that they were thus carnal follows. See also note on ver. 1. ¶ *For whereas, &c.* Their conduct is alleged in proof of their moral state, according to our Saviour's rule; "the tree is known by his fruit." Matt. xii. 33. There is no surer test to be applied to the human heart. ¶ *Envying.* The original word occurs in sixteen other places, and is translated *envy* or *envying*, Acts xiii. 45; Rom. xiii. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 20; Jas. iii. 14, 16; *zeal*, John ii. 17; Rom. x. 2; 2 Cor. vii. 11; ix. 2; Phil. iii. 6; Col. iv. 13; *indignation*, Acts v. 17; Heb. x. 27; *fervent mind*, 2 Cor. vii. 7; *jealousy*, 2 Cor. xi. 2; and *emulation*, Gal. v. 20. On inspection it will be seen to denote an excited state of the mind, or, as it is once translated, a fervent mind. It is sometimes used in a good sense, and sometimes in a bad sense. It has the latter sense in this place. Some claimed to be superior to others in spiritual endowments, and they were envious of each other. Not only were the leaders thus envious, but their followers shared this excitement of the mind in a very uncomfortable degree. ¶ *Strife.* See note on Rom. i. 29, where the same word is translated *debate*. It always indicates a bad state of mind. It has no affinity with the word used in Phil. i. 27. ¶ *Divisions.* "Dissensions and quarrels. The margin correctly renders it *factions*. The idea is, that they were split up into parties, and that those parties were embittered with mutual recriminations and reproaches, as they always are in a church." — *Barnes.* ¶ *And walk as men.* Conduct like the mass of mankind, who neither accept the revelation, nor profess to be under the influence of its spirit. Such was the proof exhibited by the apostle that the Corinthians were not yet in a fit condition to receive with profit the higher mysteries of Christianity.

4. For while one saith, &c. See note on ch. i. 12. This is a specific

of Paul, and another I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by

application of the general charge in ver. 3, and indicates the precise evil against which the apostle testifies, in these introductory chapters.

5. *Who then is Paul, &c.* What has Paul done, that a sect should call itself by his name? or Apollos, that his name should be assumed by another sect? Are we the authors of your faith? Have we assumed such leadership? Have we pretended to be anything more than servants of another? See note on ch. i. 13. ¶ *But ministers.* The word used here occurs frequently in the New Testament, and is rendered *ministers, deacons, and servants.* It indicates a person employed in some special service, and in no case does it imply the idea of superiority. A minister is properly one who serves others, or administers to their necessities or convenience. See Mat. xx. 26–28. In these latter days, the bearers of this title have somewhat overrated its original significance, and have assumed, by virtue of their office, to be "lords over God's heritage" rather than "ensamples to the flock." 1 Pet. v. 3. But such was not the apostolic estimate of the office. They regarded themselves as the servants of their brethren for Christ's sake, 2 Cor. iv. 5, and in precisely such a character, Paul here proceeds to describe himself and his fellow-laborers among the Corinthians. ¶ *By whom ye believed.* Through whose instrumentality the truth of the gospel has been communicated to you, that ye might believe it. ¶ *Even as the Son gave to every man.* If this refer to the preachers of the gospel, the meaning is, that they received each his own particular message to be made known to men. If it refer to believers, it means that the measure of each man's faith depends on the influence of the spirit. If it refer to both, it means that all their spiritual endowments are the fruit of divine grace. In either case, God is recognized as the original

whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos

author of all good, and as entitled to supreme honor and reverence. The impropriety of usurping or encouraging others to usurp the honor due to him alone, follows as the necessary consequence. "This idea, that all the gifts and graces which Christians had, were to be traced to God alone, was one which the apostle Paul often insisted on; and if this idea had been kept before the minds and hearts of all Christians, it would have prevented no small part of the contentions in the church, and the formation of no small part of the sects in the Christian world." — *Barnes*.

6. *I have planted.* The metaphor is here drawn from husbandry, and is continued through ver. 6-9. The apostle intends to say that he established the church at Corinth, or was the first preacher of the gospel in that city. See Acts ch. xviii. According to his figure of speech, he first scattered the seeds of truth in the minds of his brethren. Although he disclaimed the idea of being regarded as the head of a sect, yet here, as elsewhere, he claims to be at least the equal of others. He had done as much for the Corinthian church as any other man; nay, more; he had first implanted the seed, without which all the subsequent watering would have been useless. See 2 Cor. xi. 23. Yet for all this he desired no honor beyond that which was rightfully due to a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, ch. iv. 1, 2, who properly dispenses the gifts provided by his Master; and he protests that his fellow-stewards deserve no higher honor. ¶ *Apollos watered.* In a dry soil, such as is common in eastern countries, tender plants need frequent watering. Indeed, irrigation was necessary, and was extensively practised to promote the growth of more mature plants, and to stimulate vegetation generally. The figure was readily understood at Corinth. After Paul had planted the gospel there, after he had sowed the seed of truth, and had departed, Apollos visited that city, and watered the

watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that

young plants; that is, he encouraged the growth of faith in the hearts of the brethren, by instruction, exhortation, and admonition. Yet, as Paul did not create the seed which he planted, so neither did Apollos make it to grow by his care of it. Both were serviceable in their place, as instruments in the work; but success depended on a higher power. ¶ *But God gave the increase.* Man may sow his seed, and water it by artificial means, or it may be watered by the rain from heaven, yet it will never grow without that vivifying power which God alone can impart. So neither will the seed of truth spring up into living faith in the heart without the spiritual influence of God. He both furnishes the seed and makes it to grow. All the intermediate agencies are but his servants, or the instruments by which he accomplishes his purposes. God works by means. In the natural world, seed must be sowed in soil prepared for it, or there will be no harvest. So the truth must be made known, and be received into good and honest hearts, or faith and its purifying influences will not exist. But whether the agencies employed in either work be human, or whether they be the ordinary forces of nature, the effect results from the purpose and energy of God alone. Why, then, says the apostle, give honor to the instruments, rather than to that divine grace which employs them?

7. *So then, &c.* From the fact that God gives the increase, it follows that neither the planter nor the waterer is anything; that is, in comparison with him, without whose divine energy all the labor would be in vain. *Anything* is here to be taken in a comparative sense, not absolutely. Paul does not intend to say that the labors of himself and his associates were absolutely of no account, or that the ministers so employed were deserving of no consideration whatever. He affirms the contrary in many places. But, by a common Hebraism, he declares that

planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and

the honor due to men, as instruments in the hand of God, is very small, in comparison with that which is due to God himself; so small, indeed, that it is not worthy to be mentioned, but should rather be accounted as nothing. "So, then, neither is he who planteth to be esteemed as anything, nor he that watereth; but the glory of all must be ascribed to God that giveth the increase. Whence it is evident that there can be no cause why you should run into factions about or desire to be named from them who have no excellency but from God and do nothing but by his assistance." — *Whitby*.

8. *Are one*. Not identical, but united; one in purpose, and therefore to be regarded alike. Both labored for the establishment of the gospel. Both preached the truth "according to the grace of God" given unto them, ver. 10. Both desired that their brethren should be enlightened and should "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" 2 Pet. iii. 18; and to this end they cheerfully encountered toil and peril. Both, according to their own enlightenment and faithfulness, had preached the same truth. Planting and watering, to be sure, were different labors; but they tended to the same result, and were guided by the same spirit. "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all," ch. xii. 6. "The planter and the waterer, on this account, are all one, neither of them to be magnified or preferred before the other; they are but instruments, concurring to the same end, and therefore ought not to be distinguished and set in opposition one to another, or cried up as more deserving one than another." — *Locke*. ¶ *And every man*. What is here asserted is doubtless true concerning all men; but it is here applied particularly to

every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's

the several preachers at Corinth; for of these alone is the apostle here speaking. ¶ *Shall receive his own reward*. His proper reward. Although no man can make God his debtor, or properly claim a reward for his services, — since both the ability and the disposition to labor are freely given, — yet he is graciously pleased to style the happiness which results from a consciousness of faithfulness, in some sense, a reward of well-doing. In this sense, it is written, "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Matt. x. 42. ¶ *According to their labor*. This is the uniform gospel rule. Happiness and misery, properly so called, are apportioned according to the degrees of obedience and disobedience to the divine law. And this universal rule is here applied to the particular persons of whom the apostle speaks. They should receive a proper recompense according to their faithfulness in the special labor entrusted to them. It matters not whether the labor of one be regarded as more important than that of the other, or more honorable or productive of more visible results; faithfulness in its performance is the only criterion, in respect to the proper reward. "The planter and the waterer are one, in respect of the end which they have in view, and each shall receive his proper reward, according to his fidelity in his proper labor, and not according to his success in laboring." — *Macknight*. Paul himself had less immediate success in some cities than in others. Yet, if he was equally faithful in all, his proper reward was as great in the one case as in the other.

9. *For we are laborers together with God*. The form of the common translation indicates that the men spoken of were co-laborers with God; as if

husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

there were a partnership in the labor between him and them. And in this sense some commentators have understood the text; supposing that God performs his part of the labor and requires men to perform theirs, for the accomplishment of the desired result. But the better opinion is, that a different translation is allowable and proper. "The Greek does not, of necessity, imply this. It is, literally, not that we are his co-partners, but that we are his fellow-laborers; that is, fellow-laborers in his employ, under his direction; as we say of servants of the same rank, they are fellow-laborers of the same master, not meaning that the master was engaged in working *with* them, but that *they* were fellow-laborers one with another in his employment. The main design and scope of this whole passage is to show that God is all, that the apostles are nothing; to represent the apostles, not as joint-workers with God, but as working by themselves, and God as alone giving efficiency to all that was done. The idea is that of depressing or humbling the apostles, and of exalting God; and this idea would not be consistent with the interpretation that they were joint-laborers with him." — *Barnes*. Other commentators have expressed a similar opinion. "We, the preachers of the gospel, are but laborers employed by God about that which is his work." — *Locke*. "We teachers are joint-laborers, belonging to God." — *Macknight*. "We, indeed, that preach, and they that baptize, are both servants or officers of God, and co-operate one with another in that great work of dressing and building up of souls, which, when it is wrought, must not yet be attributed to us, the instruments, but only to God, the author and perfecter of all." — *Hammond*. To the same effect is the translation by *Conybeare*: "for we are God's joint-laborers;" though he intimates a different opinion as to the meaning of the apostle. ¶ *Ye are God's husbandry*. This word *γεωργίον* does not elsewhere occur in the New

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me,

Testament, but the corresponding verb is found in Heb. vi. 7, where it is translated *is dressed*, that is, is cultivated; and another substantive, from the same root, occurs often, and is uniformly translated husbandman. This word is generally taken to mean a field, or place cultivated. Pursuing the metaphor commenced in verse 6, the apostle represents the Corinthian church as the field in which he had planted the word, which Apollos had watered. All their moral culture was the result of the labor bestowed upon them by divine appointment. The word had been sown in their hearts; and although the mature fruit had not yet been produced, still some improvement had been effected in their moral condition. ¶ *God's building*. A new metaphor is here introduced, and continued through several verses. Having represented the church as a cultivated field, he now speaks of it as a building erected by God. He elsewhere uses this architectural metaphor in his Epistles. See 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 21, 22. The idea illustrated by this figure of speech, as by the other, is, that whatever advantage the church had derived through the gospel, all the glory should be ascribed to God. The intermediate agents were but servants employed by him for the accomplishment of his work.

10. *According to the grace of God, &c.* By the favor of God. Paul regarded it as a favor that he was employed in this labor. He may have special reference to the fact that he was commissioned as the apostle to the Gentiles, as in Eph. iii. 8; "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The idea is still prominently kept in sight, that all the labors of the apostle were by divine direction; all his skill derived from God; and all his success the result of a higher energy than his own. The conclusion is natural, that neither he nor his associates should be regarded

as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every

man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can

as anything more than servants of the Most High, dependent on him, not only for direction, but for wisdom and success. ¶ *As a wise master-builder.* "A skilful architect." — *Conybeare, Locke, Macknight,* and others. Paul does not claim superiority over his brethren, as if they were ordinary builders, and he the *master-builder*. But he had proceeded as every judicious architect would; that is, he had laid a firm foundation before he proceeded to erect his superstructure. ¶ *I have laid the foundation.* Precisely what that foundation is, we learn in ver. 11. The same architectural metaphor is used, as in ver. 9, but with some change of application. There the believers are represented as the building; here the doctrines taught and believed are so represented. Some, indeed, understand the laying of the foundation to indicate the establishment of the church at Corinth, to which additions were subsequently made, through the labors of others, partly of good material, partly of bad. But it certainly comports better with what follows, to understand both the foundation and superstructure to represent doctrines; and in this opinion many commentators agree. ¶ *And another buildeth thereon.* Other teachers. Paul had imparted to them the rudiments, the first principles of Christianity; especially that great doctrine which lies at the foundation of the system, on which all its parts must rest. After his departure, other teachers had attempted to impart additional information. From ver. 12, it appears that such attempts were not uniformly successful. Some had given good instruction, consistent with the fundamental doctrine. The instructions of others were of a different character. ¶ *But let every man take heed,* &c. This admonition may be regarded as addressed to all the religious teachers at Corinth, and especially to the false teachers. He reminds them that they will be held responsible

for their faithfulness and integrity, ver. 14. 15. The same admonition should be carefully heeded by every professed teacher of the gospel. He should never lose sight of the great truth which lies at the foundation; and he should be cautious that he teaches nothing which is inconsistent with that truth. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful," ch. iv. 2. The office of a religious teacher is of vast responsibility. If he be faithful in the proclamation of the truth "he shall receive a reward," ver. 14: but woe to that man who wilfully or negligently leads his people astray. See the affectionate exhortation of this apostle to his favorite disciple, I Tim. iv. 16.

11. *For other foundation.* Any different foundation. One had been laid, which was sufficient. There was no place for another, and no other would be sufficient to sustain the fabric of Christianity. ¶ *Can no man lay.* That is, effectually. There is no other true foundation; no other which is sufficient. The apostle does not deny the ability of others to lay a foundation, or preach a doctrine different from that which he had proposed as the basis of the Christian system. Some had already perverted the gospel of Christ. Gal. i. 6-9. But his meaning is, that the Christian religion cannot securely rest on any foundation except that which is its natural basis, and which he had already laid in the minds of his brethren. ¶ *Which is Jesus Christ.* "Jesus the Christ." — *Conybeare.* This was the great truth, namely, that Jesus was the Christ, which Paul first preached at Corinth, ch. ii. 2; xv. 3. On the fact that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and his authorized messenger to men, rests the whole fabric of Christianity. Remove this, and all faith in revelation crumbles to dust. But while this fact remains as a living truth in the heart, we may rely on his testimony with unfaltering confidence,

no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, pre-

and lay hold on his instructions, admonitions, and promises, as if they were uttered by the mouth of God himself. Hence, when the apostles went out into the world, their first effort was to establish the fact that Jesus, who was crucified and raised again, was the Son of God. Thus Peter, on the day of Pentecost, urged this fact at Jerusalem. Acts ii. 22-36. See also Acts iii. 12-18; v. 29-32. And when the same apostle was specially directed to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, the same great fact was his principal theme. Acts x. 36-43. The preaching of Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, was of similar character. Witness his address at Antioch, Acts xiii. 23-41; to the jailer at Philippi, Acts xvi. 31; at Thessalonica, Acts xvii. 3; at Athens, Acts xvii. 30, 31; at Ephesus, Acts xix. 3-5; xx. 20, 21; at Jerusalem, Acts xxii. 6-10; at Cesarea, Acts xxvi. 22, 23; at Rome, Acts xxviii. 23. Thus, among the fellow-laborers with the apostles, Apollos, when he had learned "the way of God more perfectly," went to Corinth, and "mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." Acts xviii. 24-28. And it is worthy of notice, that the record mentions no other doctrine preached by him. Thus, when Philip found the Ethiopian nobleman reading the prophecy, he "opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus." This was all that he preached, and all that he required to be believed, as fundamentally necessary to a profession of Christianity. For when his convert asked to be baptized, "Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And he answered, and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Whereupon Philip straightway baptized him. Acts viii. 26-40. Thus, also, the same profession of faith was satisfactory to the great Master himself. When Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son

of the living God," Jesus required no more, and attributed this faith to the divine influence. Matt. xvi. 16, 17. Well, then, might Paul regard this great truth as the foundation of Christianity. If a reason be required why a belief in this truth is not only important but indispensable to faith in the Christian religion, of the many which might be given, a single one is sufficient:—Whoso believeth that Jesus is the Christ must necessarily also believe that all his testimony is true, and therefore has full assurance of faith in all the doctrines which he taught: but whoso believeth not that Jesus is the Christ has no such assurance, inasmuch as he rejects the divine authority of the teaching, and cannot know whether it be true or false.

12. *If any man build on this foundation.* If any man construct a system of doctrine upon this foundation. This primarily refers to the religious teachers at Corinth; but it embraces a general truth, equally applicable to all religious teachers and investigators and believers in all ages. Among those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, various theories have prevailed, in respect both to doctrines and duties, concerning the proper construction of the edifice of Christianity. It was so in the apostolic age. Acts xi. 1-18; xv. 1-29; Gal. ii. 11-21. Such difficulty existed at Corinth. We find several allusions in this Epistle to the Judaizing principles, by the prevalence of which the apostle was so much annoyed through his whole ministry. It is known, also, that the early Greek converts endeavored to incorporate much of their philosophy into the structure of Christianity, and this adulterating process had already commenced. While some cautiously and conscientiously added to the fundamental truth of Christianity, only such other truths as were spoken by Jesus, or by those "holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Pet. i. 21; others freely incorporated into their

cious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be

made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire

system either Jewish traditions or the philosophical theories of the Greeks. Hence, while the foundation was the same, the structures erected thereon were far from being alike. ¶ *Gold, silver, precious stones, hay, wood, stubble.* These several words scarcely need explanation, as the substances indicated are so familiarly known. They are used here, agreeably to the architectural metaphor, to illustrate the difference between true and false doctrines. The first three — gold, silver, and precious stones, or “valuable stones,” as *Macknight* translates, or “precious marbles,” according to *Conybear* — being of a durable character, are used to represent doctrines of truth, which will bear the most trying test. Hay, wood, and stubble, being perishable, easily consumed, are used to represent false doctrines, which must sooner or later perish. All the words are happily chosen, not only in regard to the value of the substances denoted, but in regard also to their capacity to resist the action of fire, the figure of the test to be applied to them, ver. 13. Some commentators have understood the apostle to speak here of men in the Christian church, instead of the doctrines believed by them. But the more general opinion agrees with the interpretation already given. “Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, that is, sound doctrine which will bear the trial of the fire, wood, hay, stubble, human eloquence and wisdom, legal rites and Judaical traditions, which will be abolished and vanish away, every man's work shall be made manifest.” — *Whitby*. To the same effect, substantially, *Hammond, Lightfoot, Assem. Annot., Doddridge*, and many others.

13. *Every man's work shall be made manifest.* Its true character shall be made to appear. Truth will endure the most searching trial; but falsehood cannot abide it. ¶ *For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire.* Some suppose the day

here mentioned to be “the day of judgment,” in its popular sense, and the *fire* to be the fire of endless torment. But others, with more propriety, understand the reference to be to a *day* and *fire* on the earth. Some, as *Lightfoot* and *Hammond*, think the time when Jerusalem should be destroyed is indicated; *Macknight* and others suppose the approaching time of persecution is denoted; *Grotius, Rosenmuller*, and others, apply the passage to time in general. The latter opinion is perhaps quite as reasonable as either of the others. The note of *Lightfoot*, however, is too valuable to be overlooked. “Two things shall discover every man's work, ‘the day’ and ‘the fire’; both which you may not understand amiss of the word of God, manifesting and proving all things. For the light of the gospel is very frequently called ‘day,’ and the law of God called ‘fire.’ Deut. xxxiii. 2. If any one's work or doctrine will endure the trial of that fire, he shall receive the reward of sound doctrine; if the doctrine of any will not endure it, but be consumed, he shall receive the damage of his pains and labor lost, but he himself shall be saved; but this as he is proved by fire.” Another commentator expresses his opinion thus: “By fire, either we are to understand, according to the interpretation of St. Austin and others of the ancients, the fire of persecutions, tribulations, and temptations, whereby the sound doctrine is tried and proved, as it were affording then to us most strong and solid comforts and consolations which no other is able to do; or the fire of the Holy Ghost, who, by the light of God's word, doth manifest the verity or vanity of doctrines delivered by the preachers, and, like unto fire, reduceth and bringeth to nothing, like hay and stubble, whatsoever is foisted in by human invention. For though such doctrine be not tainted with heresy, yet because blended with vanity, it is no better than hay and stubble; or by fire is

shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide

which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall

meant the appearing of Christ at the day of judgment, likened to fire for two qualities, brightness and a consuming force."—*Assem. Annot.* It will be observed that the last is named as the *possible* meaning, but without much appearance of confidence in it. And well might the writer lack such confidence; for he distinctly regards the *hay, wood, and stubble*, ver. 12, as denoting doctrines, not men, and believes the teacher of them will be saved, ver. 15. ¶ *And the fire shall try every man's work.* Whatever the fire may denote, the idea is distinctly exhibited that the true character of all doctrines shall be made manifest; or, according to the metaphor, that the quality of the superstructure, erected on the true foundation, shall be tried and ascertained, whether it be substantial and permanent, or whether it be visionary and perishable.

14. *If any man's work abide, &c.* If it shall appear that the doctrines which he has incorporated into the system of Christianity are consistent with eternal truth; if they be such as Christ revealed, or such as the Holy Spirit revealed through others. ¶ *He shall receive a reward.* See note on ver. 8. Shall be approved as a wise builder. Shall enjoy the consciousness that he has been rightly guided into the truth. The apostle exhorts his beloved disciple to build after this manner, and indicates a similar reward. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. ii. 15.

15. *If any man's work shall be burned.* "If it shall not be found to bear the test of the investigation of that day, as a cottage of wood, hay, and stubble, would not bear the application of fire."—*Barnes.* If the doctrines he has taught are false, and will not abide the test. ¶ *He shall suffer loss.* He shall not receive the reward which is enjoyed by him whose work abides. "If any man's doctrine or teaching

will not endure the trial, as hay and stubble and dross will not the fire, he shall lose the praise of his labor, which shall not be accepted nor rewarded by God. Notwithstanding for his own person, if he have held the foundation,—he shall be saved."—*Assem. Annot.* ¶ *But he himself shall be saved.* That is, from permanent harm. Those commentators who refer the *day* and the *fire* to the destruction of Jerusalem, with its attendant convulsions, through many nations, understand this salvation to be preservation from the great calamity which overwhelmed so many. Those who suppose the hay, wood, and stubble, to represent evil men instead of false doctrines, understand salvation from endless misery to be intended. It is not easily understood, however, why the preacher himself should be saved, if he have guided his flock in the way to utter destruction. The more probable meaning is this: So long as a man holds the fundamental fact that Jesus is the Christ, although he may have believed and taught much in connection with it which is false, when these false doctrines become manifest and are consumed in his sight, yet he shall not lose his confidence in God. However mortified and chagrined he may be, when he perceives the inutilty of his labor, yet clinging fast to the foundation, he shall yet feel that he has a safe refuge. ¶ *Yet so as by fire.* This is added, to carry out the metaphor; as if one escaped from his dwelling which was in flames. The fire consumes the errors; but the person escapes. "Shall be saved as one who scarcely escapes through the flames."—*Conybeare.* The following remarks on the whole passage, ver. 12-15, are worthy of notice, though I do not vouch for their entire correctness. "The sectaries at Corinth did not reject Jesus as the Christ, but along with this, the only fundamental, they wished to connect some peculiarity of their own as equally fundamental. Such peculiarities, St. Paul declares, provided they

be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

are not taught so as to interfere with the only foundation, or to add to it, had better be left to the action of time; the *day* shall test them, for it will place them in the burning focus of the universal mind, enlightened continually by God's truth. If these secondary views are in harmony with the foundation, if they are of the gold and precious metal of the soul, they will stand the fiery test, and they will remain eternal possessions to the Christian mind; but if they are mere fancies, dross and stubble, they shall be burned up by the searching fire of truth. Yet the man himself shall be saved, provided he has not lost sight of the fundamental truth that Jesus is his moral Lord, though, since his favorite theories and systems will burn like wood and hay, his salvation, if he has consumed time and thought and zeal in over-devotion to such non-essentials, may be as a rescue from the flames, and not without scathe."—*Thom.*

10-15. In the foregoing notes on this passage, I have followed the usual current of interpretation, and have endeavored to select what seemed most valuable. I have very grave doubts, however, whether the apostle designed such a general application of his language, which was addressed to a single church for a special purpose. The special purpose of the first four chapters of this Epistle was to point out the impropriety of the divisions and contentions in the church, resulting from the inordinate respect paid to the several teachers. In this chapter, that special purpose is manifest. Under a metaphor drawn from husbandry, ver. 6-9, no one doubts that Paul designed to show that, while a proper reward awaited himself and the teachers who succeeded him at Corinth, according to their several faithfulness, yet none of them could rightfully claim or receive any higher honor than belonged to faithful servants of God, who alone gave success, and who alone was to be acknowledged

as the Giver of blessings. Then follows the passage under consideration, clothed in an architectural metaphor. For the same purpose? or for a purpose altogether different? No intimation is given of a change in purpose. On the contrary, the close of the chapter, ver. 18-23, distinctly indicates that the same purpose has been pursued throughout. What, then, is the most natural and obvious meaning of the metaphor here employed? Metaphors, it should be remembered, "do not go on all fours." The leading idea is principally important. The imagery is chiefly ornamental. The substance of the metaphor is this: A good foundation being given, if a man erect thereon an edifice composed of permanent materials, it will stand, and he has a reward for his labor; but if he construct an edifice of combustible materials, it cannot abide the action of fire, but is consumed, though its builder narrowly escapes from the conflagration. Considering the main design of the apostle, the leading idea of the metaphor appears to be this:—The foundation of the Christian religion is laid, namely, that Jesus is the Christ. If any of your teachers (at Corinth) construct a system of religious doctrine composed of truths, it shall abide securely on that foundation, and the teacher shall enjoy his proper reward, — the consciousness of having labored faithfully and successfully. But if any one construct a system embracing chiefly false doctrines, it will not abide the test, but will be destroyed, and the teacher will suffer loss; "all his time and labor will be found to be uselessly employed and spent." — *Clarke.* Yet while he retains his faith in Jesus as the Christ, he shall be regarded as a Christian, though the test applied to his doctrines will leave him scarcely anything more than a single claim to true discipleship. It remains, to inquire what is indicated by the *day* or time when this test should be applied. I think we

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God

destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

have a distinct intimation, on this point, in ch. iv. 19-21. "I will come to you shortly," says the apostle, "if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power." And he intimates that he may have occasion for severity, as well as for love and meekness. We may therefore suppose him to mean that, when he should visit Corinth, he would show clearly who were the true teachers, and who the false, by applying to their respective doctrines the test of truth, — the word of God. Then should the gold, silver, and precious stones, shine even more brightly, and the hay, wood, and stubble, be consumed. The application of the truth taught under this metaphor, to the special purpose of the apostle, is obvious. The teachers at Corinth are admonished to be more modest in their pretensions, and their hearers to be less lavish of their praises and ascriptions of honor. Let the teachers meekly learn wisdom, is the exhortation, ver. 18, and "let no man glory in men," ver. 21. This, I believe, was the special design of the apostle in this passage, and that it should be interpreted accordingly.

16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?* By changing the application of the metaphor somewhat, and returning to the form in which it is used in ver. 9, the apostle here speaks of the church at Corinth as "God's building," or "the temple of God." The change is from doctrines to men. "Moreover, to pass from their doctrines to the evil effects of them in your divisions, know ye not that ye Christians are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you, the Christian Church, as the Shechinah did in the temple?" — *Whitby*. "He returns to the comparison commenced ver. 9. The edifice, says he, which I commenced, and which others have labored to complete, is not destined to a profane use, but is a holy temple. Paul adopts the form of speech used in the Old Testament,

where God is often said to dwell among the Jews, and they are called his temple and habitation." — *Rosenmuller*. "The allusion is probably to the fact that God dwelt by a visible symbol, the Shechinah, in the temple, and that his abode was there. As he dwelt there among the Jews, as he had there a temple, a dwelling-place, so he dwells among Christians." — *Barnes*. A similar figure of speech occurs, ch. vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 20-22. ¶ *And that the spirit of God dwelleth in you.* Our Lord promised his disciples that they should enjoy the influence of the divine spirit. See note on John xiv. 16. Paul speaks also of the indwelling and influence of the same spirit. Rom. viii. 26. Whether as individuals, or in their associated capacity, Christians may be regarded as consecrated to the service of God, and to be more or less under the influence of his spirit.

17. *If any man defile, &c.* "If any man shall do hurt to the temple of God, God shall do hurt to him." — *Conybeare*. "The Greek word is the same in both parts of the sentence. 'If any man destroy the temple of God, God shall destroy him.' This is presented in the form of an adage or proverb, and the truth here stated is based on the fact that the temple of God was inviolable. The figurative sense is, if any man by his doctrines or precepts shall pursue such a course as tends to destroy the church, God shall severely punish him." — *Barnes*. Although the language, *if any man*, is general, yet the argument of the apostle requires its particular application to the Corinthian church. It probably refers to those teachers in that church, who injured their brethren by false doctrines, and, as some suppose, by vicious examples. "By dividing the church, which is his temple, and in which one and the same spirit dwells, into parts and factions. Or the words may be referred to the corrupting of the temple of God by filthiness of the flesh, uncleanness and fornication; or

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world,

let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19 For the wisdom of this

by filthiness of the spirit, that is, idolatrous practices; both which the Corinthians were guilty of. Compare ch. vi. 15-19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; vii. 1." — *D'Oyly and Mant.* The general scope of the argument, however, renders it most probable that the apostle here speaks only of opinions or doctrines injurious to the brethren at Corinth. Their wrong practices he rebukes in the subsequent chapters. ¶ *Which temple ye are.* An emphatic repetition of the declaration in ver. 16. "This proves that though Paul regarded them as lamentably corrupt in some respects, he still regarded them as a true church, as a part of the holy temple of God." — *Barnes.*

18. *Let no man deceive himself.* Abandoning metaphors, the apostle in plain language makes a practical application of his argument. "Let no man deceive himself with vain speculations of his own worth and abilities." — *Doddridge.* Self-deception is a common infirmity. It besets men in regard to their mental powers and acquisitions as frequently perhaps as in any other respect. The false teachers, here referred to, probably valued very highly their traditionary lore, or their skill in philosophy; and it would seem that they were willing, on this account, to be regarded, and indeed regarded themselves, as superior to Paul. Hence the divisions in the church, some adhering to Paul, and others following other teachers. To them is addressed the caution, deceive not yourselves. Think not more highly of yourselves than you ought to think, but think soberly what is the true measure of your knowledge. Rom. xii. 3. ¶ *If any man among you.* A general phrase, but used with a special application to the religious teachers at Corinth; for of these the apostle is particularly speaking. ¶ *Seemeth to be wise.* Seems to himself to be eminently wise, or is so regarded by others. Let no man be deceived by a false estimate of his own wisdom, nor

by the reputation for wisdom which he may have from others. From what follows, it appears that the admonition is specially directed against "Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn from the truth," Tit. i. 14, to which the Judaizing teachers were addicted, and the "oppositions of science, falsely so-called," 1 Tim. vi. 20, of which the Greeks were so inordinately proud. ¶ *In this world.* In this age, or generation. Many commentators connect these words with those which follow; let him become a fool in the estimation of this world. But others prefer the more natural construction, as in the received version. The sense is substantially the same in either case. If any man is regarded, or regards himself, as eminently conspicuous in what the world calls wisdom, let him become a fool in the world's estimation in order to attain true wisdom. Or, as *Conybeare* translates the passage, "If any man among you is held wise in the wisdom of this passing world, let him make himself a fool (in the world's judgment) that so he may become truly wise." ¶ *Let him become a fool.* That is, let him abandon traditions and vain philosophy, and hold fast only the doctrines of the gospel, of which the crucified Jesus is the foundation. He would thus become a fool in the estimation of the world; for these doctrines were "unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness," ch. i. 23. ¶ *That he may be wise.* That he may be truly wise; that he may attain that wisdom which will abide the severest test. Worldly wisdom, which vanishes away before the truth of God, will not make a man truly wise. If he would possess the true, he must renounce the false. Not that the apostle would undervalue true science and sound learning, which are useful and profitable to men: but all philosophy which is contradictory to revelation is spurious, and must be renounced; all philoso-

world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

phy which professes to be of itself sufficient, without revelation, to discern and disclose the divine character and purposes, has been tried and found wanting; it must become subordinate to revelation, before it can be regarded as true wisdom. The wisdom of this world and the wisdom of God are contrasted in ch. ii. 6; and the same contrast is implied here, and more distinctly stated in the next verse.

19. *For the wisdom of this world.* Such as those possessed who seemed to be wise, ver. 18; the "old wives' fables" of the Judaizing teachers, and the abstruse philosophy of the Greeks. "It does not mean that science and prudence and law, that the knowledge of his works, that astronomy and medicine and chemistry, are regarded by him as folly, and as unworthy the attention of men. But the apostle refers here to that which was esteemed to be wisdom among the ancients, and in which they so much prided themselves, their vain, self-confident, and false opinions on the subject of religion; and especially those opinions when they were opposed to the simple but sublime truths of revelation."—*Barnes.* ¶ *Is foolishness with God.* Is accounted folly by him; is absolute folly when compared with his wisdom. See ch. i. 20–28. ¶ *For it is written,* &c. See Job v. 13. God takes the wise, or confounds them in their own craftiness, when he allows them to become entrapped by the crafty machinations of others, or when he allows them to become so involved in their own plots that their designs are defeated by the very measures adopted for their accomplishment. As when the wily politician, under pretence of consulting the public good, seeks to gain personal honor or profit by a sacrifice of principle and a crafty pandering to "public opinion,"—and suddenly awakes to the consciousness that he has mistaken that opinion, which, instead of sustaining and honoring

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

him, overwhelms him with contempt or indignation. Or as when a professed religious teacher, by sophistical arts, endeavors to persuade men that his theories are more worthy of belief than the revealed truth of God, and at length becomes convinced by the general verdict of men, that he is regarded as a hypocrite or a weak-minded man. Whosoever relies for success on craft and cunning, rather than on truth and straight-forward honesty, is liable to become entangled in his own snares, and to be the victim of his own wicked devices. Special reference is had, however, in this place, to the teachers at Corinth, who are admonished that their craftiness would not prove wholly successful, but would recoil on themselves or on each other. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, causing one sect of philosophers to destroy what another established, and so showing the uncertainty and vanity of their pretended wisdom."—*Whitby.* Moreover, as is intimated in ver. 12–15, those teachers who attempted to build up a reputation for superior wisdom, by mingling the philosophy of the schools with the revealed word, would sink into comparative insignificance, as soon as their plan was thoroughly tested.

20. *And again.* See Ps. xciv. 21. ¶ *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise.* Men are sometimes unable to counteract the designs of others, because they cannot look into the mind and perceive the precise plan which is devised. They are obliged to form their opinion by the outward appearance; but God looketh on the heart. 1 Sam. xvi. 7. The wisest and most wary cannot conceal their thoughts from the Searcher of hearts. The special reference here is to such as seemed to be wise, ver. 18. The Lord clearly perceived the true character of their thoughts, and the vanity of their wisdom. ¶ *That they are vain.* "That they lack real wisdom; they are foolish; they shall not be accomplished as

21 Therefore let no man glory in men : for all things are yours ;

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life,

they expect; or be seen to have that wisdom which they now suppose they possess."—*Barnes*. The idea here is, that the thoughts of those who seemed to be wise were vain, or foolish, as compared with true wisdom; and that the only way in which these persons could become truly wise was to abandon this spurious wisdom, and to embrace the revealed wisdom of God, even at the hazard of being called fools by the world, ver. 18.

21. *Therefore, &c.* Paul here applies the foregoing facts and arguments to the main subject under discussion. He has shown that, although one plant and another water, as God alone gives the increase, he alone should have the glory, ver. 5-9; that whatever may have been builded on the foundation of Jesus the Christ, nothing would abide the trial except revealed truth, ver. 10-15; that God would rebuke and punish those who corrupted the truth by an admixture of errors, ver. 16, 17; and that all the wisdom which any teacher claimed, or was reputed to possess, inconsistent with revealed truth, was foolishness and vanity, ver. 18-20. The conclusion is natural. If all have taught the same truth, all received it from the same source, and deserve equal honor, in proportion to their faithfulness. If any have added to the truth their own traditions or vain speculations, and thus formed distinct parties of followers, instead of deserving honor, they deserve blame, and will suffer loss. ¶ *Let no man glory in men.* Or, boast in men. Acknowledge no man as master. Render honor to no man as the leader of a faction. All the faithful teachers are fellow-laborers in the service of God, as the disciples of Christ, and are not to be regarded as masters. Such do not claim to have preached according to their own wisdom, but only to have spoken the wisdom of God, which he revealed by his spirit, ch. ii. 7-10. Why, then, call yourselves by the name of one or another, or why regard any one as

your special leader, when all teach the same gospel, and all derive their authority and ability from one source? The faithful teachers neither desire nor deserve such honor. If the unfaithful desire it, their pretensions are unfounded, and it will soon appear that the means which they have used to secure it are mischievous and hurtful, ver. 15. Therefore boast in no man whatever, and cease entirely from your "envying and strife and divisions," ver. 3. ¶ *For all things are yours.* "Wherefore, since we are all joint-laborers of God, let no one boast in men, as if any teacher belonged peculiarly to him; for all the ministers of the gospel, and all its privileges, and all the blessings of providence, belong equally to you all."—*MacKnight*. As they had a common interest in all these things, it was highly improper to gather themselves into opposing factions, under different leaders. And as the preachers were not masters, but servants appointed by a common Master to labor for the benefit of all his subjects, it was highly improper that any of these should claim or accept that kind of honor which the contentious Corinthians were disposed to render.

22. *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.* See ch. i. 12. In this verse, as in Rom. viii. 38, 39, the apostle specifies several particulars, to give emphasis to the general expression "all things." ¶ *Or the world, &c.* The paraphrase of this verse by *Doddridge*, seems very well to express the general meaning and intent of the apostle:—"For all things are yours, and we in particular are to be regarded, not as your lords and commanders, that you should enlist under our banners; but rather as your servants. I except not myself, or the most honored among my brethren; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, be in question, we are all equally yours, to serve you to the utmost of our abilities, in the advancement of your best interests. Yea, I may go

or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

further, and say, whether we speak of the *world*, God will give you so much of it as shall be for your real good; and indeed he supports its whole frame in a great measure for your sakes; or, if we survey *life*, in all its various conditions, or *death*, and all its solemn harbingers and attendants, God will make the one or the other, in different views, advantageous to you, and will adjust the circumstances of both with the kindest regard to your happiness. *Things present or future*, the comforts and privileges of this life, on the one hand, or its afflictions and troubles on the other, and at length the boundless felicity of the eternal state, where affliction and trouble shall be no more known; *all are*, through the divine grace, *yours*."

23. *And ye are Christ's*. That is, his disciples, and his alone. Christians belong to Christ, in various senses. But this is the special sense here intended. "You belong to him; and should not therefore feel that you are devoted to an earthly leader, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Peter." — *Barnes*. ¶ *And Christ is God's*. This is the climax. Christ was sent to lead men to God. Him alone we are to regard as the authorized messenger from God, empowered to speak in his name. The apostles acknowledged themselves subject to him, and spake by authority delegated by him. They preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. 2 Cor. iv. 5. They made no effort to induce men to follow them any further than they followed Christ, ch. xi. 1. They desired no factions in their own name, but sought to induce all to take the name of Christ, and depart from all iniquity. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Yet, highly as they exalted Christ, and acknowledged their subjection to him, they recognized God, who put all things under him, as his superior, ch. xv. 27. Hence Paul reminds his brethren that while they

CHAPTER IV.

LET a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ,

yield honor and obedience to Christ as their Master, they should look beyond him to their Father and his Father, to their God and his God. See John xx. 17. Recognizing none below him as master, they should yet look above him, and yield supreme homage to God alone. "Instead of being the disciples of this or that teacher, ye are Christ's disciples, and Christ is God's disciple. As the foregoing expression, 'ye are Christ's,' means that the Corinthians belonged to Christ as his disciples, this expression, 'Christ is God's,' I think means that in making the gospel revelation, Christ is God's disciple or servant. So Christ himself says, 'My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.' 'As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.' 'I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say and what I should speak.' 'The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself.' John vii. 16; viii. 28; xii. 49; xiv. 10. This I suppose is the apostle's meaning likewise, when he tells us, 'The head of Christ is God,' ch. xi. 3." — *Mac-knight*. "And the conclusion from hence is this, that you give not up your faith to any but to Christ, that you resolve firmly to obey him and adhere to him uniformly, as he resigned himself up to the will of God, to do and to suffer whatsoever he appointed him, in the great office of being our mediator and redeemer." — *Hammond*.

CHAPTER IV

The subject embraced in the preceding three chapters is further discussed in the fourth. We shall best understand it by keeping its special purpose distinctly in our minds. It contains many general truths, equally applicable to all men in all ages; but they are introduced here with a special design, and their application is specified.

and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in

stewards, that a man be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very

The exorbitant claims of false teachers at Corinth, the folly of those who admitted those claims, and the impropriety of the divisions and contentions which naturally resulted, were the particular evils against which the argument in this chapter is directed.

1. *Let a man.* Any man, whether teacher or disciple. It seems that some of the Corinthians had alleged somewhat against Paul, as an excuse for the divisions which existed among them, ver. 3. He would have them understand that those allegations were unfounded; and therefore appeals to all, that the conduct of the apostles generally, and of himself in particular, had been strictly proper; that they had neither usurped authority and honor which did not belong to them, nor had they been unfaithful in the trust committed to them. ¶ *So account of us.* Think of us; regard us; consider us. "Look on us."—*Conybear.* Paul speaks here of himself and his fellow-apostles. ¶ *As of the ministers of Christ.* Or servants of Christ. See note on ch. iii. 5. Let the whole church regard us as servants of a common master, engaged in the accomplishment of the same work; not laboring for our own personal advantage, that we might be honored as leaders of sects, or followed as heads of separate factions, but striving together to convince men that Jesus is the Christ, the true head of every man, ch. xi. 3. We have given no countenance, by our conduct, to those false teachers, who assume superiority over each other, and even over us. ¶ *And stewards.* Officers, bearing this title, had the general management of the pecuniary affairs of their masters, collected the dues, and made provision for the family. The office and title still exist in England. ¶ *Of the mysteries of God.* Of the truths revealed in the gospel. See note on ch. ii. 7. To the apostles was committed the charge to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Mark xvi. 15. They were fully qualified for the work by the instructions of their master and the inspiration of the spirit. It was their business to make a proper distribution of the treasure entrusted to their charge, and in due time to communicate these divine mysteries to such as were capable of comprehending them. Their duty was well described by our Lord. "Who, then, is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?" Luke xii. 42. "The apostle gave to those doctrines, which in former ages had been kept secret, but which were now discovered to all through the preaching of the gospel, the appellation of *the mysteries of God*, to recommend them to the Corinthians, as was formerly observed, ch. ii. 7, note. And he called himself *the steward*, or *mystagogue*, of these mysteries, to intimate that the deepest doctrines as well as the first principles of the gospel were entrusted to him, to be dispensed or made known; and that his faithfulness as a steward consisted, not only in his discovering them exactly as he had received them from Christ, but in his discovering them as his hearers were able to receive them."—*Macknight.* This, as it would seem from ver. 3, was designed to refute the allegation by his opposers that he had incompetently or unfaithfully performed his apostolic service at Corinth. The general truth embraced in this passage, aside from its specific application to the evil existing in the Corinthian church, is very well stated by *Barnes*:—"It is implied in this verse, that the office of a minister is subordinate to Christ; they are his servants: that those in the office should not attempt to be the head of sect or party in the church: that the office is honorable, as that of a steward is: and that Christians should endeavor to form and cherish just ideas of ministers, to give them their true honor; but not to overrate their importance."

small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's

judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

2. *Moreover, &c.* In addition to the general duty of a steward to manage the affairs of his Master, and make provision for the household, the apostle calls attention to a special duty of such a servant, namely, faithfulness to his master; faithfulness in the execution of his trust. ¶ *It is required, &c.* It is imperatively demanded. Fidelity is an indispensable requisite, in an office so important. A steward of a household has his master's goods in his possession, and at his disposal. If unfaithful, he is utterly unfit for his office; and his discharge from office would immediately follow the exposure of his lack of fidelity. The stewardship of which the apostle speaks is of a different character, but the same fidelity is required. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6, was communicated to the apostles; and it was required of them that they should be faithful in dispensing that light to their fellow-men. This special obligation to be faithful the apostle here acknowledges, preparatory to the notice of an allegation against him, ver. 3, that he had been remiss in the performance of his duty.

3. *But with me.* As far as I am concerned. In my own estimation. In the former verses, Paul speaks of himself and his fellow-apostles collectively, describing their common duties and responsibility. He here changes the phraseology, and speaks of himself individually, submitting his own conduct to the test of the principles already declared. His own faithfulness had been impeached, and his own faithfulness he proceeds to defend. ¶ *It is a very small thing.* That is, compared with one much more important. Paul by no means despised the good opinion of his brethren. Nay, he was solicitous that they should recognize him as a faithful disciple of the Master, ver. 15, 16. But this was of much less consequence, in his estimation, than the approval of his Mas-

ter, and the approval of his own conscience. ¶ *That I should be judged of you.* The word here translated *judged* is sometimes used to denote *trial* or *examination* of the qualities of a person or object; and sometimes to denote the conclusion formed from such trial or examination. In this latter sense it seems to be used here; for the apostle says he does not even judge himself. He surely does not mean that he does not examine himself. Self-examination he urges on others, 2 Cor. xiii. 5; and he would not neglect its practice. But he did not presume to determine with certainty concerning his own character. He appealed to a wiser Judge, ver. 4. So here he must be understood to mean that it was comparatively "a very small thing," in his estimation, what conclusion other men formed in regard to his faithfulness, or whether they approved or disapproved his conduct. ¶ *Or of man's judgment.* Of any human judgment whatever. Some think, and perhaps not improperly, that the apostle added these words, lest the Corinthians should suppose the previous words indicated contempt for their judgment in particular, or regarded it as of less importance than the judgment of others. To guard against such a construction of his language, which would serve to render it even more difficult to convince them of their errors, he adds this phrase and the next; assuring them that not only their judgment concerning his faithfulness, but any human judgment whatever, yea, even his own judgment, was of much less consequence to him than the judgment of the Lord. ¶ *Yea, I judge not mine own self.* The prophet long ago exclaimed, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9. Paul was fully conscious of the difficulty, and would not pronounce with undue confidence upon his own moral condition. He knew the liability of men to self-deception, to a partial appreciation of

4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby

their own virtues and vices, and would not rely absolutely on his own opinion. He referred, therefore, for a perfectly accurate decision, to the Lord, ver. 4; to him who searches the heart, and tries the reins, that he may equitably render to every man the fruit of his doings. Jer. xvii. 10. The precise point upon which the apostle here represents the judgment of men to be of small value, is supposed to be the same to which he alludes in ch. iii. 1. He had taught the fundamental doctrines of Christianity at Corinth, but had not communicated some of its higher mysteries, or more profound doctrines. It would seem that some of the false teachers accused him of incompetency, in not fully understanding the mysteries of the gospel, or of unfaithfulness, in not fully disclosing them. In either case, they claimed superiority to him, inasmuch as they had taught much more than he did, and were therefore willing to be accounted leaders. In self-defence, he asserted that he was sufficiently instructed in the mysteries of the gospel, ch. ii. 6-10, which he had received by direct revelation, Gal. i. 11, 12, but which he had refrained from communicating more fully to the Corinthians on account of their unfitness to receive such instruction, ch. iii. 1, 2. If his declarations were not satisfactory to the false teachers and their followers, and they still regarded him as incompetent or unfaithful, he assures them that their judgment is "a very small thing" in his estimation, and appeals to a higher tribunal for righteous judgment.

4. *For I know nothing by myself.* This is an unfortunate translation, as it fails to express the meaning of the apostle. It is universally acknowledged by critics and commentators, that the phrase is elliptical, and that it should be otherwise translated. "For although I know not that I am guilty of unfaithfulness." — *Conybeare*. "For I am conscious to myself of no fault." — *Macknight*. "For I know nothing of unfaithfulness by myself." — *Whitby*. "For though I

am not conscious to myself of any unfaithfulness." — *Haweis*. "My conscience does not reproach me." — *Beausobre*. The paraphrase by Dean Stanhope, quoted by *D'Oyly* and *Mant*, is to the same purpose: "For though, I bless God, my conscience reproaches me not with any neglect or mismanagement in my office." One more authority may be quoted, for the sake of the very sensible remarks connected with it. "There is evidently here an ellipsis to be supplied, and it is well supplied by Grotius, Rosenmuller, Calvin, &c. 'I am not conscious of evil or unfaithfulness to myself; that is, in my ministerial life.' It is well remarked by Calvin, that Paul does not here refer to the whole of his life, but only to his apostleship. And the sense is, 'I am conscious of integrity in this office. My own mind does not condemn me of ambition or unfaithfulness. Others may accuse me, but I am not conscious of that which should condemn me, or render me unworthy of this office.' This appeal Paul elsewhere makes to the integrity and faithfulness of his ministry. See his speech before the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, Acts xx. 18, 19, 26, 27. Comp. 2 Cor. vii. 2; xii. 17. It was the appeal which a holy and faithful man could make to the integrity of his public life, and such as every minister of the gospel ought to be able to make." — *Barnes*. "¶ *Yet am I not hereby justified.* "Yet my own sentence will not suffice to justify me." — *Conybeare*. To justify sometimes signifies to make just, and sometimes to make one's uprightness manifest, or to prove one's uprightness, in which latter sense the word is used here. Paul may be understood to speak of his personal convictions; as if he had said, Although my conscience does not accuse me of any fault in the apostolic work, yet I am not absolutely certain that I am free from blame. He well knew the liability of men to mistakes, in estimating their own character and conduct. See note on ver. 3. He remembered a former mistake of his own, which he afterwards publicly ac-

justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

knowledged; "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Acts xxvi. 9. He would not therefore rely too confidently on his own opinions or his convictions of duty. He was ready, and acknowledged his obligation to act according to those convictions, and to perform his duty faithfully, as he understood it. He would not, however, assume to be *certain* that he was just before God, but referred the decision of this question to a higher tribunal. Others understand him to speak of the effect to be produced on the minds of the teachers and others at Corinth. He did not expect that the approval of his own conscience would justify him in the estimation of others, or convince them that he was perfectly upright and faithful. "For though I can truly say that I know nothing by myself, yet I am not hereby justified to you."—*Locke*. "For I am conscious to myself of no fault in the discharge of my stewardship. However, I am not by this justified, I know, in your eyes."—*Macknight*. If this be regarded as the true interpretation, we may suppose the apostle to have designed a covert intimation to his accusers, that if they did not regard his opinion as conclusive evidence in respect to his competency and faithfulness, much less need he regard theirs, verse 3. He certainly had the better opportunity to know the facts. If his judgment would not satisfy them, neither need their judgment disturb him. ¶ *He that judgeth me is the Lord*. God searches the heart, and clearly sees all the secret springs of action. He alone knows the precise character of every man. To his decision the apostle submitted himself, with the utmost confidence. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." 1 John iii. 21. For while he acknowledged many imperfections, he had an unwavering hope of mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. vii. 18-25. He had also the support of conscious integrity, in his appeal to the righteous judgment of God. "Our re-

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord

joining is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." 2 Cor. i. 12. Had his accusers similar cause of rejoicing? Did their consciences give the same testimony? Had their labors at Corinth been equally sincere? "Perhaps there is here a gentle and tender reproof of the Corinthians, who were so confident in their own integrity, and a gentle intimation to them to be more cautious, as it was possible that the Lord would detect faults in them where they perceived none."—*Barnes*. It is not unlikely that the apostle refers not only to the righteous decision which the Lord will make concerning the true characters of men, but also to an open manifestation of that decision; as if he had said, "The Lord will judge both me and you: and he will make it clearly manifest in the sight of men, whether you or I have been more fully entrusted with the mysteries of the gospel, or have been more faithful in our stewardship." The language in the following verse indicates such a reference.

5. *Therefore*. Because you are thus liable to judge incorrectly concerning others, and even unable to judge with absolute certainty concerning yourselves. This verse contains the logical conclusion which follows from the principles announced in the previous verses. ¶ *Judge nothing before the time*. Before the proper time; that is, "until the Lord come." Then you may be guided by the judgment which he renders, and makes manifest. If you anticipate his judgment, you are liable to grave mistakes. This admonition is specially addressed, like the preceding discourse, to the factious teachers and their followers at Corinth, who had not hesitated to adjudge Paul guilty of incompetency, or unfaithfulness, or both. They had also adjudged certain of their teachers to be superior to others. He advises them not to be in such haste; for it would soon be made manifest how each

come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of dark-

had exercised his stewardship. "To judge, here means to pronounce a decision whether this or that teacher is superior to another."—*Rosenmuller*. "The vice which he here reproveth in the Corinthians was, that they gave more praise to some than to others, odiously extolling some to the disparagement of himself and others who deserved as well or perhaps better than they."—*Assem. Annot.* "Be not too forward in your censures of me."—*Hammond*. This admonition was directed against "passing their censures on St. Paul, ver. 3, and questioning his fidelity in his office, ver. 2, of whom they had no authority so to judge, nor any occasion so to judge."—*Whitby*. "This is one of those general expressions, of which there are a number in scripture, which must be limited by the subject to which they are applied; see another example, ver. 7. The Corinthians were not to pass any judgment on Paul's general behavior as an apostle, till Christ, his Master, came and judged him."—*Mac-knight*. In the interpretation of "those general expressions, of which there are a number in scripture," the importance of ascertaining with precision "the subject to which they are applied" cannot be over-estimated. With reference to this subject, and citing this verse as an example, *Horne* states his first rule thus: "Ascertain the primary meaning of the passage under consideration."—*Intro. ii. 524*. If this rule be carefully observed and honestly applied, we shall the more easily understand what follows in this verse. ¶ *Until the Lord come*. To what coming of the Lord does the apostle here refer? for it is a "general expression," variously applied in the scriptures. Whether by "Lord" we understand the apostle to refer to God, or to the Lord Jesus Christ, it is equally true that the "coming" indicates different visitations in different places. For example, our Lord declared that he would "come in the glory of his Father, with his angels," during the life-time of some who then heard him. *Matt. xvi. 27, 28*. This is generally understood to

refer to the time when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jewish commonwealth overturned. And to the same time and the same coming many commentators suppose reference is made in *ch. iii. 13-15*. Again he promised his disciples, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." *John xiv. 3*. This coming is manifestly different from the former. So of the coming of God. Any special manifestation of divine power, any special indication of the divine spirit, is called a coming of God. To understand precisely what is denoted by his coming, therefore, we should first ascertain "to what subject it is applied." In the verse under consideration most commentators agree in supposing the apostle to refer to the coming of "the Lord Jesus at the day of judgment, when all secrets shall be revealed, and a true judgment shall be passed on all men."—*Barnes*. But is this the special subject which the apostle is discussing? Such a subject has not been even mentioned by him hitherto in this chapter; and what follows, to the end of the chapter, is equally destitute of reference to it. He is discussing an entirely different subject. By any sound rule of interpretation, we are to "limit this general expression by the subject to which it is applied." That subject manifestly is the improper conduct of the Corinthians, in ascribing higher honor to some of their local teachers than to Paul and his fellow-apostles. Moreover, there was strife and contention among them in regard to the relative merits of their several teachers. The apostle had lastly spoken of their folly in attempting to pass judgment upon his conduct, as they could not see his heart; the Lord only could render a just judgment, *ver. 3, 4*. In this verse, he exhorts them to refrain from such rash judgment in respect to him or others, assuring them that the Lord would come and would clearly distinguish between the true and the false teachers, so that the difference should become manifest. The time of this visitation may be properly

ness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts:

regarded as the same which is indicated in ch. iii. 12-15, where the same general subject is discussed. In one place doctrines are specially referred to, and persons in the other. In both places, what is uncertain to human discernment is to be made manifest by the spirit of the Lord. In the one, the work of men, or the doctrine preached by them, is to be demonstrated true or false; in the other, their hidden springs of action, the counsels of the heart. In the one, the trial is made, as by fire; in the other, the Lord is represented as judging; and in both, a just reward is rendered. The *day* mentioned ch. iii. 13, is manifestly the same as that indicated by the phrase "till the Lord come." It may be repeated, concerning the *day*, that "two things shall discover every man's work, 'the day' and 'the fire.' Both which you may not understand amiss of the word of God, manifesting and proving all things. For the light of the gospel is very frequently called the 'day,' and the law of God called 'fire,' Deut. xxxiii. 2." — *Lightfoot*. The same manifestation of the spirit and power of the Lord, through his word, and through the miraculous gifts bestowed on the apostle, would not only make a clear distinction between true and false doctrines, but would also "make manifest" the difference between them who preached the gospel "in simplicity and godly sincerity," and them who "handled the word of God deceitfully." The time when the Lord would thus judge between the apostle and his accusers, is indicated in ver. 19-21. At that time, the divine judgment should be exhibited by visible tokens. It was no unheard-of thing that God should thus openly authenticate the truth and condemn falsehood. He had done so in ancient times. When his prophet contended with the prophets of Baal, he said: "Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." Baal's prophets called, and "cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out

upon them;" but all in vain. Then Elijah, having poured an abundance of water "on the burnt-sacrifice and on the wood," so that the trench around the altar was filled with the water, called on the name of the Lord: — "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.'" 1 Kings xviii. 17-40. Thus was the divine judgment visibly manifested on the earth, and in the sight of men. A somewhat similar and equally distinct judgment the apostle expected, when he should visit Corinth. The power of the divine spirit should then confirm the truth and overturn error, and exhibit openly the distinction between true and false teachers. The divine mission of our Lord had been thus authenticated. John iii. 2; x. 37, 38; Acts ii. 22. A like testimony had been granted on behalf of the apostles. See notes on Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. See also Mark xvi. 20; Acts iii. 4-9; iv. 16; v. 12; viii. 6, 7. Paul shared abundantly in this testimony. Acts xix. 11-12.; ch. xiv. 18; 2 Cor. xii. 12. It was surely not unreasonable, therefore, that he should expect a divine interposition on his behalf, when he should next visit Corinth, ver. 19-21. And such a visible manifestation as he expected, he might well style the coming of the Lord. To this long note I add that the foregoing interpretation is not wholly unsupported by authority; a few commentators have perceived the "primary meaning of the passage," and recognized "the subject to which it is applied," though the number is very small. "Let us not, then, be forward in pressing censures on each other; but leave all judgment to that time when a very different light shall be thrown on the characters of men, from any they now receive." — *Gilpin*.

and then shall every man have praise of God.

I quote this simply because it differs from the almost universal reference to a far distant day of judgment. More to the purpose is what follows: "God, the righteous judge, will determine everything shortly; it is his province alone to search the heart, and bring to light the hidden things of darkness. If you be so pure and upright in your conduct, if what you have been doing in these divisions, &c., be right in his sight, then shall you have praise for the same; if otherwise, yourselves are most concerned." — *Clarke*. This does not distinctly recognize the relation of this passage to ch. iii. 12–15. That relation, however, is thus recognized in what *Horne* pronounces to be "without exception the best commentary on the sacred writings ever published either by Catholics or Protestants." *Intro. ii. 750*. Thus: "I am not willing to anticipate the judgment of God concerning other preachers, nor to encourage you to condemn them ignorantly. We may await the judgment of God, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart. Then we shall know their character by their works which they have done. If their works abide, like gold tried by the fire, we will render to them the just praise which they merit; but, if otherwise, we will condemn them after the supreme Judge has pronounced his judgment." — *Calmet*. ¶ *Who both will bring to light, &c.* See note on Rom. ii. 16. ¶ *And will make manifest, &c.* By a Hebrew parallelism, the same general idea is repeated in different words. That general idea is, that the true character of men shall be disclosed; special reference being had, as before, to the teachers at Corinth, whose intentions and motives of action were hitherto but imperfectly understood by their brethren. ¶ *And then shall every man have praise of God.* That is, according to the measure of their faithfulness. The apostle all along supposes that these false teachers were genuine believers in the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, and should therefore be saved, or acknowl-

6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to

edged as Christians, even though it might be so as by fire, ch. iii. 15. The meaning of the whole verse may be briefly stated thus: Be not in haste to decide the relative dignity of the apostles and the teachers in your church, nor the degree of honor to which each one is entitled. God will soon make their true characters manifest, and distinctly indicate their respective authority and the degree of his approbation of each. This will be a safe and sure guide for you to follow.

6. *And these things.* All which I have written concerning the improper honors claimed by your teachers and rendered by you, resulting in strife and contention. The reference is to all which precedes, from ch. i. 10. ¶ *I have in a figure transferred to myself, and to Apollos.* Some suppose that there were no sects at Corinth, bearing the names of Paul and Apollos; and that the apostle should be understood to say that he had used these names to show how improper it would be to regard even *them* as heads of factions, — much more to follow inferior teachers as such. But the more probable supposition is, that there were sects bearing these names, among others; and that the apostle selected these as a sample of all, for certain reasons which he presently indicates. By assuring them that neither himself nor Apollos desired or deserved special honor as heads of sects, or teachers in their own names, but should only be regarded as fellow-laborers in God's service, ch. iii. 5–9, and "stewards of the mysteries of God," ch. iv. 1, he admonished them that it was highly improper to render such undue honor to other teachers, who, at the best, had only built on the foundation laid by him, ch. iii. 10–15. ¶ *For your sakes.* Out of regard to your feelings. Had Paul named those teachers whose conduct was most offensive, their followers might have regarded it as a personal attack, and have resented it as such; in which case it would have been much more difficult to convince them of their

myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no

one of you be puffed up for one against another.

7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what

errors. Concerning himself and Apollos he might speak freely. Their mutual friendship was well known, and nobody suspected them of rivalry. Although he intended his remarks should be understood to apply to other teachers, he well knew that this form of address would be less personally offensive than any other. To spare their feelings, to avoid the excitement of their anger, which would only render them stubborn and prevent them from receiving his admonitions with profit, he used no names except his own and that of Apollos. ¶ *That ye might learn in us.* By our examples: by our wishes, as made manifest in our conduct. ¶ *Not to think of men above, &c.* This was the great fault of the Corinthians, and four chapters are devoted to its correction. Lest by any means his brethren should not understand his purpose, the apostle declares that the whole preceding discourse was designed to show that they ought not to regard any teacher with more honor than belonged to a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. This was all the honor desired by himself, or by Apollos. Neither of them claimed to have been the author or original discoverer of the doctrines he preached; but each professed to preach what he had first received from a higher teacher. Neither of them had desired to become the founder of a sect bearing his own name; but they labored together to persuade men to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Neither of them had stirred up strife among brethren, through a desire for personal honor to the disparagement of others; but both conformed, in word and deed, to the direction of the Lord Jesus: "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Matt. xxiii. 8. If they were thus humble, inferior teachers should also cultivate humility. If they had disclaimed sects and parties under their own names, infe-

rior teachers should copy their example. If they refused invidious honors from their brethren, much less excusable was the rendering of such honors to inferior teachers. Since such honors cannot properly be given to me or to Apollos, says the apostle, you ought to understand that you should not render them to other teachers who are not our superiors, nor think too highly of any man whatever. ¶ *Above that which is written.* "Probably referring to what he had said in ch. iii. 5-9, 21; iv. 1. Or it may refer to the general strain of scripture, requiring the children of God to be modest and humble." — *Barnes.* ¶ *That no one of you be puffed up for one against another.* Being puffed up "signifies the state of a person's mind who is filled with a high opinion of himself, and who, in consequence of that high opinion, indulges hatred and wrath against all who fail in paying him the respect which he thinks his due. This latter operation of pride is the evil which the apostle condemns in the passage before us, as is plain from the turn of his expression: That no one of you may, on account of one, be puffed up against another." — *Macknight.* "Make it not matter of pride to yourselves or contemning of others, that ye are the disciples of such or such; in plain terms, beware that you do not break out into factions, one to the despising of another, boasting, one that he hath received the faith from Paul and not from Apollos, another that he is a follower of Apollos and not of Paul, &c." — *Hammond.*

7. *For who maketh thee to differ from another?* The form of address is here slightly changed and is directed specially to the teachers, the leaders of the several factions at Corinth. The idea is, who hath made you superior to others? If you are thus superior, whence comes that superiority? Is it the result of your personal unaided

hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst re-

exertions, which might excuse a degree of pride; or is it a gift, which should inspire thankfulness and humility? "As if the apostle had said, who is it that maketh one minister to differ from and excel another? Is it not God? If so, then let those ministers who have received the greatest gifts from God, whom the inspiration of the Almighty hath made most wise and understanding, the most humble themselves; and let none take occasion from thence to despise others who have received less." — *Burkitt*. The inquiry is general, but the reference is probably to those particular endowments in which the teachers considered themselves superior to each other, and superior even to the apostles themselves. These were chiefly spiritual gifts, such as ability to teach the mysteries of the gospel, to perform miracles, and to speak with tongues. See ch. xii. 28-30; xiii. 1, 2; xiv. 12. All these, Paul acknowledges, are valuable; yet he names a still more valuable endowment, ch. xii. 31; and ch. xiii. ¶ *And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?* However superior your endowments, did you not receive them all? Can you call a single one your own? This is but another form of the previous inquiry. Paul acknowledged his own dependence: "By the grace of God I am what I am," ch. xv. 10; and he here endeavors to impress on others a lesson of like humility. Would any of them pretend that by the efforts of his intellect alone, he had discovered "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory?" ch. ii. 7; and if so, would he pretend that he created his own intellect, and did not receive it as a gift from the Father of spirits? Would any one pretend that he wrought miracles by the exertion of his natural powers, or obtained ability to speak with tongues by much study and diligent investigation? Such seems to be the specific point of the inquiry, yet it embraces a general truth, applicable to all human possessions and endowments. If it were duly considered, the spirit of pride would give place to

humility and gratitude. "The same question may be applied to native endowments of mind, to opportunities of education, to the arrangements by which one rises in the world, to health, to property, to piety, to eminence and usefulness in the church. It is God who makes one, in any of these respects, to differ from others, and it is especially true in regard to personal piety." — *Barnes*. In these and all other respects, what have we that we did not receive? ¶ *Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, &c., or boast.* See note on Rom. iv. 2. "How then canst thou boast of it, as if thou hadst won it for thyself?" — *Conybeare*. The folly of such boasting and its signal rebuke are forcibly exhibited in Isa. x. 5-19. Our blessed Lord himself was not ashamed to acknowledge his dependence on the Father, and to confess that his knowledge and power and authority were not original or acquired, but bestowed on him. John v. 19, 27, 30. The apostles uniformly acknowledged their obligations to God for his abundant gifts, and never boasted of their possessions. See Acts iii. 12-16; iv. 8-10. All true Christians should be equally humble. The question is here urged, however, particularly upon the proud and envious teachers at Corinth. They are admonished that boasting is inexcusable, inasmuch as they possessed nothing which had not been given to them, and all the difference which existed between them and others was the result, not of their own wisdom and strength, but of the distinguishing grace of God. The reference is particularly to their spiritual gifts, of which they were especially proud. These they had neither earned nor purchased, but had received as a free gift from God. Boasting, therefore, was utterly excluded. Rom. iii. 27. Some commentators suppose the apostle does not here refer to the general fact that God is the giver of all good things, but to the specific fact that the teachers at Corinth received their spiritual endowments through the intervention of the apostles, and ought not to boast against them. "To the false teacher

ceive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

8 Now ye are full, now ye

are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

I say, Who maketh thee to differ from others? for what spiritual gift hast thou, which thou didst not receive from some apostle? And now, if thou didst receive thy gift from the apostles, why dost thou boast as not receiving it, by setting thyself up against me, who am an apostle?"—*Macknight*. The contrast between these teachers and the apostles, in the following verses, furnishes some reason for adopting this interpretation. In either case, even spiritual gifts furnished no justifiable cause of boasting, and the argument of the apostle was unanswerable.

8. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich; ye have reigned as kings.* Three metaphors, arranged in the form of a climax, are here used to express the self-satisfied and proud condition of the teachers at Corinth. The first is taken from fulness of bread, or the entire satisfaction of bodily hunger. See Acts xxvii. 38, where the same word is translated *eaten enough*. The second is taken from abundance of earthly goods, leaving no reasonable want ungratified. The third is taken from sovereign power, which not only secures fulness of bread and abundance of riches, but also controls other men, and is regarded as the topmost height of earthly ambition. These metaphors are used ironically, denoting not the actual condition of the Corinthian teachers, but the condition which they supposed themselves to have attained. "A bitter taunt: chastising the boasting of the Corinthians, who had forgot from whom they had first received those evangelical privileges, concerning which they now prided themselves. They were enriched with spiritual gifts; they reigned, themselves being judges, in the very top of the dignity and happiness of the gospel."—*Lightfoot*. "You persuade yourselves now, that ye are in happy condition, and that ye want nothing more of spiritual gifts, and for that extol yourselves above all others, as a king in his king-

dom; or, you carry yourselves securely, as in a peaceable kingdom, whereas we are exposed to all fear and danger; which the apostle speaketh by way of an ironical reproof, to make way for his following exhortation to humility, exemplified by himself and his mean condition."—*Assem. Annot.* ¶ *Without us.* "During my absence."—*Macknight*. Others, with perhaps better reason, understand these words as qualifying the former: ye have reigned as kings without aid from us; ye are conscious of no obligation to us, but imagine yourselves to be independent, and at full liberty to despise us; ye are not aware that ye need our assistance in any respect, but ye feel fully competent to rule the church by your own wisdom and your own power. "But ye forsooth have eaten to the full of spiritual food, ye are rich in knowledge, ye have seated yourselves upon your throne, and have no longer need of me."—*Conybeare*. ¶ *And I would to God ye did reign.* Some understand this as a wish that they were actually kings, so that they might protect their brethren, and restrain the opposition of their enemies. But this seems inconsistent with the general design. By the metaphor of reigning, spiritual authority or a superabundance of spiritual gifts is denoted; not civil authority, such as is exercised by earthly potentates. Using one metaphor instead of three, and as including all, the apostle may be understood to say, I heartily wish you were as well furnished with spiritual gifts as you imagine, and that you made a proper use of them. I wish you were truly full of the knowledge of the Lord, rich in the use of tongues, and in other spiritual endowments, and able to overcome all opposition by the display of miraculous powers, through the agency of the Holy Spirit. ¶ *That we also might reign with you.* That when I visit you, I might find nothing lacking in your faith, nothing to rebuke

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as

and reform in your conduct, but every thing to render you fit associates in the great work of the ministry committed to me. Then might I be a partaker of your joy, and the joy both of me and of you be pure and spiritual. "Would to God ye did reign, and that it went so happily with you indeed, that we might reign with you, and that we might partake of some happiness in this your promotion, and might be of some account among you." — *Lightfoot*. In the midst of his afflictions, which he proceeded to mention, the apostle would have derived much comfort, could he have known that the Corinthian church, to which he devoted eighteen months of his ministry, was in the actual enjoyment of such spiritual blessings. His was no selfish joy. He rejoiced in the prosperity of his brethren, and suffered gladly for the promotion of their growth in grace and knowledge. Rom. i. 8-12.

9. *For I think*. Some interpret that follows as ironical. As if he had said, It would seem then that God designs to pour contempt on us while he crowns you with glory. The next verse is doubtless ironical, which gives some color to this interpretation. But I rather agree with those who interpret this verse as spoken in sober earnest; and understand the apostle to describe the actual dangers to which he and his fellow-apostles were exposed. It has been suggested, that however highly favored the Corinthians might imagine themselves to be, this description of the labors and sufferings of the apostles may have been designed to intimate that two classes so unlike in condition were probably unlike also in character. ¶ *God hath set forth us the apostles last*. Last of all, God hath exhibited us, the apostles. Some have supposed that Paul referred to the low civil condition of the apostles; and others, that he referred to the fact that he himself was the last who was called to be an apostle. But neither of these interpretations seems suitable. The several terms used in this verse manifestly refer to a custom, well known at Corinth, of com-

ing men to fight with each other and with beasts, for the amusement of the populace. These contests were exhibited in the amphitheatre; and the most bloody were reserved for the last. So Paul says the apostles were exhibited last, as appointed to death, or destined to a fatal struggle. They were made a *spectacle*, Greek *Θέατρον*, a theatre. Manifest allusions are all these to the *spectacles*, as they were termed, so familiar to all who were under Roman jurisdiction. By this comparison, the apostle describes the dangers which beset him and his associates.

¶ *As it were appointed to death*. "As persons appointed to death." — *MacKnight*. "As to us apostles, I think that God has set us forth last of all, like criminals condemned to die, to be gazed at in a theatre," &c. — *Conybeare*. "Here the apostle seems to allude to the Roman spectacles, that of the *bestiarii* and the *gladiators*, where in the morning men were brought upon the theatre to fight with wild beasts, and to them was allowed armor to defend themselves and smite the beasts that did assail them; but in the meridian spectacle were brought forth the gladiators naked, and without anything to defend them from the sword of the assailant, and he that then escaped was only reserved for slaughter to another day; so that these men might well be called *men appointed for death*: and this being the last appearance on the theatre for that day, they are said here to be set forth the last. Of these two spectacles Seneca speaks thus: 'In the morning men are exposed to lions and to bears; at midday to their spectators, those that kill are exposed to one another; the victor is detained to another slaughter; the conclusion of this fight is death. The former fighting, compared with this, was mercy; here is only butchery; they have nothing to cover them; their whole body is exposed to every stroke,' &c. *Epist.* 7. Hence *Tertullian* cites the words thus: 'I think God hath chosen us apostles last, as men to be exposed to wild beasts.'" — *Whitby*. By comparing

the world, and to angels, and to men.

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ;

we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

11 Even unto this present

the apostles to such persons devoted to death, and to whom there was no escape, a lively image is presented of the dangers which beset them in the work of apostleship. These dangers were not imaginary but real. It is believed that only one of the whole number died a natural death; all the others fell victims to persecution. ¶ *A spectacle.* As on a theatre. See Acts xix. 29, 31, where the same word is translated *theatre*. ¶ *Unto the world, and to angels, and to men.* As the gladiators were caused to fight publicly in the theatre, for the amusement and gratification of thousands of spectators, so the apostle represents his trials as publicly exhibited to the world. "Who can see us in any other light than as spectacles prepared for the ridicule and cruelty of the world?" — *Gilpin*. "Angels and men denote the universe, as gazing upon the conflicts and struggles of the apostles. It is a vain inquiry, here, whether he means good or bad angels. The expression means that he was *public* in his trials, and that this was exhibited to the universe." — *Barnes*. A similar reference to a great company of spectators occurs in Heb. xii. 1.

10. In this verse, the apostle again indulges in irony; and it is pungent and severe. ¶ *We are fools.* You imagine us to be fools, far inferior to you in wisdom. See 2 Cor. x. 10. You regard and represent us as incapable of teaching, because we have not already communicated the higher mysteries to those who were unfit to receive them, ch. iii. 1, 2. ¶ *For Christ's sake.* On account of Christ, or in reference to his doctrines. On account of the manner in which Paul had preached the gospel, not with the rhetorical graces nor in the philosophical formula of the Greeks, or mingled with the traditional lore of the Jews, but in simplicity and godly sincerity. Hence he was regarded as a fool, or destitute of wisdom, by the heathen, ch. i. 21-25.

The false teachers, for similar reasons, adopted the same conclusion. You account us fools, says the the apostle, on account of the manner in which we serve Christ. ¶ *But ye are wise in Christ.* Or, on Christ's account. "The phrase 'in Christ' does not differ in signification materially from the one above, 'for Christ's sake.' This is wholly ironical, and is exceedingly pungent. You, Corinthians, boast of your wisdom and prudence. You are to be esteemed very wise. You are unwilling to submit to be esteemed fools. You are proud of your attainments. We, in the mean time, who are apostles, and who have founded your church, are to be regarded as fools, and as unworthy of public confidence and esteem." — *Barnes*. On account of their skill in philosophy or their familiarity with the Rabbinical traditions, they esteemed themselves eminently wise, not considering that the knowledge of revealed truth is the only wisdom which is really worthy of the name. ¶ *We are weak, but ye are strong.* You regard us as weak and timid, because we have preached among you only the first principles of Christianity, and yourselves as strong, because you have added other instructions, thus manifesting your strength of mind and your courage. As a matter of fact, Paul never hesitated to declare all the counsel of God, at whatever hazard. Acts xx. 27. There is reason to believe that the teachers at Corinth who are here addressed regarded policy rather than principle, and in their additional instructions endeavored quite as much to make the gospel more popular and palatable to the people as to elucidate its mysteries and to enforce its important truths. It is certain that the apostle styles some of their instructions wood, hay, and stubble, which would not abide the test of fire. ¶ *Ye are honorable but we are despised.* You claim and receive honor from the brethren, and esteem your-

hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are

selves worthy of it. You represent us as unworthy of honor, and both treat us with contempt and encourage others to do likewise. The whole verse is ironical, describing the overweening pride and vanity of the teachers at Corinth, who thus exalted themselves above the apostle. The true wisdom, and strength, and honor were his; the actual folly, weakness, and despicableness, theirs.

11. *Even unto this present hour.* The apostle here commences a serious statement of the trials and sufferings which he endured in the exercise of his ministry. This change from irony to soberness, with the connecting link, is well expressed thus: "We are reckoned fools, for suffering on account of preaching Christ truly. But ye are wise in your method of preaching Christ. We are ridiculed as weak in body and mind; but ye, no doubt, are strong in both. Ye are much esteemed by your adherents; but we are despised by them. But which of us is most worthy of esteem as preachers? In preaching Christ, I, to the present hour, both suffer hunger and thirst," &c. — *Mac-knight.* In what follows, the argument is implied that the apostles, who held fast their integrity and faithfulness amidst such trials, manifested more wisdom and strength, and were more honorable than those who secured present ease and comfort by a time-serving policy. ¶ *We both hunger and thirst.* Like their Master, the apostles were poor in this world's goods. In travelling from place to place, it would naturally happen that they would sometimes fail to find those who would willingly supply their wants; and it did sometimes happen that they fell among enemies, who persecuted and abused them. Those who would imprison and scourge the apostles, for their faithfulness to the gospel, could not be expected to be very particular in feeding and giving them drink. Paul was willing to receive contributions for the "poor saints;" but, even when among friends, he preferred to "work with his own hands," rather than be dependent on others for sup-

port, ver. 12. See Acts xviii. 3; xx. 33, 34. He, therefore, was in a condition to bear his full share of the burden of hunger and thirst, when among enemies, or even when among strangers. ¶ *And are naked.* Not literally, but comparatively. The same causes which prevented fulness of bread, would also prevent gorgeousness of apparel. Garments will wax old from constant use; and when one has neither friends to give new clothes, nor money to purchase them, the dress becomes shabby. Thus it chanced that the apostles, in their travels, often found themselves destitute of such decent garments as were customarily worn. Yet they bore their lot uncomplainingly. They knew that the Master whom they served accepted no man's person, nor judged by the outward appearance. ¶ *And are buffeted.* Struck with the hand or fist; probably designed to indicate the harsh and ignominious treatment of the apostles by the heathen. ¶ *And have no certain dwelling-place.* No permanent home. The apostles did not possess houses or lands. They forsook all and followed their Master, who "had not where to lay his head." Luke ix. 58. They devoted themselves to voluntary poverty, and trusted Providence for food and shelter, while engaged in their missionary work. There is here an implied contrast between the privations endured by the apostles for the benefit of mankind, and the comparative luxury enjoyed by the teachers at Corinth, who opposed and undervalued them. "This, with his working with his own hands, mentioned ver. 12, being written at Ephesus, where he abode near three years, it shows us that the apostle took no maintenance from the Ephesians, any more than he had done from the Corinthians. For the Ephesian Christians being both numerous and rich, if he had received maintenance from them, he would not have suffered hunger and nakedness, in which the wretchedness of poverty consists, but would have been plentifully supplied with the ordinary necessities of life. Had the apostle spent the whole of his

buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled,

time in working at his trade of tent-making, he no doubt could have procured for himself a sufficiency of convenient food and raiment. But as he employed the most of his time in preaching, his gains were small; and even these he shared with his assistants. Acts xx. 34. No wonder, therefore, that he was often in great want. For a more particular account of the apostle's sufferings, see 2 Cor. vi. 3, 5; xi. 23-28."—*Macknight*.

12. *And labor, working with our own hands.* Paul frequently refers to the fact that he wrought at his trade, while engaged in his missionary work, so that he need not be burdensome to others. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." Acts xx. 33-34. And although he enforced the duty of providing a sufficient maintenance for the ministers of the word, so "that he that plougheth should plough in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope," yet he disclaims all personal interest, saying: "But I have used none of these things; neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me," ch. ix. 9-15. See also Acts xviii. 3; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8. ¶ *Being reviled.* Not only sacred but profane history shows that the early preachers of Christianity were reviled by unbelievers. The Jews regarded them as heretics, and the Greeks as enthusiasts and babblers. ¶ *We bless.* The apostles rendered good for evil, according to their Master's direction, and endeavored thus to imitate the great Father, who is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Matt. v. 44, 45; Luke vi. 35. ¶ *Being persecuted, we suffer it.* The apostles were persecuted by unbelievers from the commencement of their ministry until death. Paul himself, before his conversion, had been engaged in the

we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13 Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth

ungodly work of persecuting the saints. Acts xxii. 4; xxvi. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 9; Phil. iii. 6. After his conversion, he endured his full share of persecutions. 2 Cor. xi. 23-25. After enduring stripes and stoning and frequent imprisonment, he suffered a violent death at Rome. Yet he made no attempt to injure his persecutors in return. Like his blessed Master, he submitted to stripes and to death, and prayed for his tormentors.

13. *Being defamed.* Literally, blasphemed; spoken of in a reproachful manner. ¶ *We entreat.* "Being blasphemed, and spoken of in the most scandalous and impious terms, we only entreat that men would more impartially examine our pretensions, that they may entertain more favorable sentiments concerning us; and in the meantime we freely forgive them their rash and injurious censures."—*Doddridge*. The principal object of the apostle, in ver. 9-13, was to show his Corinthian brethren what trials the true apostles endured, while some of their false teachers were living in luxurious ease. Yet, in this verse and the preceding, he incidentally speaks of the manner in which they met their trials, thus exhibiting to Christians in all ages an example worthy of imitation. ¶ *We are made, &c.* Not actually, but so regarded and treated by opposers. ¶ *As the filth of the world.* "The refuse of the earth."—*Conybeare*. The idea is, that they were regarded as the most worthless and despicable of men. ¶ *The offscouring of all things.* "The word signifies filth scoured off. It is used most commonly to denote the sweepings of streets and stalls, which, being nuisances, are removed out of sight as quickly as possible."—*Macknight*. Neither this word nor the word translated filth occurs elsewhere in the New Testament. They do not differ materially in signification; though the one may express the idea more intensely than the other.

of the world, *and are* the off-scouring of all things unto this day.

14 I write not these things to

Whitby, Hammond, and some others, suppose that reference is here made to the victims which were sometimes sacrificed by the heathen for the expiation of their crimes and to propitiate the gods; and they quote authorities, that the Athenians, for example, "nourished some very base and refuse people, and when any calamity or plague befel them, they sacrificed them for the purgation of the city." Such persons were designated by the same words which occur in this verse. The apostle may have had such a reference here; but it is not certain, nor, indeed, is it very material. ¶ *Unto this day.* Constantly. The ill-will and contempt, long expressed by their enemies, had not abated, but still continued in full force. See ver. 11.

14. *I write not these things to shame you.* I have a higher object than merely to make you ashamed. ¶ *But as my beloved children.* Such they were, in an important sense; for Paul had "begotten" them in the gospel, ver. 15. And notwithstanding all their faults, he loved them still, as a father loveth his children, and was even now laboring for their good. ¶ *I warn you.* I admonish you. "I instruct you."—*Macknight.* The warning or instruction of the apostle to his brethren, thus far in this epistle, is directed against their dissensions and strife, and especially against their esteeming certain false teachers more highly than the apostles. And it is generally agreed that the foregoing enumeration of trials and afflictions is designed to show that the apostles, who cheerfully and patiently endured all these things, were more worthy of honor than their calumniators, who, by a time-serving policy, secured to themselves honors, and riches, and ease. See notes on ver. 6, 11. The practical bearing of this *warning* is expressed with tolerable accuracy thus:—"It is not by way of finding fault with you, for not providing me with the necessaries of life, that I write

shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ,

thus; but I do it to warn you to act differently for the time to come; and be not so ready to be drawn aside by every pretender to apostleship, to the neglect of those to whom, under God, you owe your salvation."—*Clarke.* The spirit manifested in the *warning* here given, and which should characterize all admonitions and rebukes, is well expressed by *Barnes*:—"I do not say these things in a harsh manner, with a severe spirit of rebuke; but in order to admonish you, to suggest counsel, to instil wisdom into the mind. I say these things not to make you blush, but with the hope that they may be the means of your reformation, and of a more holy life. No man, no minister, ought to reprove another, merely to overwhelm him with shame; but the object should always be to make a brother better; and the admonition should be so administered as to have this end, not sourly or morosely, but in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner."

15. *For though ye have ten thousand instructors.* However many may have entered into my labors, professing to give you additional instruction, and whether that instruction be true or false, yet you should not forget that they are not fathers of your faith. I alone laid the foundation on which they have builded, ch. iii. 10, 11, and am alone entitled in this sense to be regarded as your father. ¶ *Instructors.* Literally, *pedagogues.* The same word is rendered *school-master*, Gal. iii. 24, 25. It denotes, as its etymology indicates, those who have the charge of children. "Those who conducted children to school, and who superintended their conduct out of school hours. Hence those who had the care of children, or teachers in general. It is then applied to instructors of any kind."—*Barnes.* Most commentators concur in this explanation. But *Conybeare* prefers the original meaning of the word, and renders the passage thus:—"Though you

yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

17 For this cause have I sent

may have ten thousand guardians to lead you towards the school of Christ." See Gal. iii. 24. The general sense of this passage, however, is not materially affected by the difference of translation. ¶ *In Christ.* In the gospel of Christ, or in Christian doctrine. ¶ *Not many fathers.* That is, only one father. Paul claims exclusive paternity of the Corinthian church, so far as Christian or spiritual paternity may be attributed to man. He first and alone proclaimed the gospel at Corinth, and laid the only sure foundation of Christian faith. To no other man were the brethren at Corinth originally indebted for their knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified, and for their faith in him. They may have had other helpers of their faith, but not other fathers. ¶ *In Christ Jesus.* Or, as Christians. See note on Rom. xvii. 7. *Macknight* renders the phrase, "to Christ Jesus, through the gospel, I have begotten you." ¶ *I have begotten you.* You were converted through my ministry. Conversion is represented as a new birth. See note on John iii. 3. ¶ *Through the gospel.* By preaching the gospel to you.

16. *Wherefore.* Because you were converted through my instrumentality; because you stand in the relation of children to me as a father. ¶ *I beseech you.* The apostle does not here assert his authority, but entreats as a brother and friend. 2 Cor. iv. 5; v. 20. ¶ *Be ye followers of me.* Hold fast the gospel as I preached it. Be not led astray by other teachers. For sake not the sure and only sure foundation of Christian faith, which I laid among you, ch. iii. 10, 11. "Let the form of doctrine which I left you be retained among you, without any new insertions by any other." — *Hammond.*

17. *For this cause.* For this purpose; with this object; to produce this result; namely, to induce you to

unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

retain the gospel in its purity, as I proclaimed it, free from admixture with vain philosophy and the traditions of men. ¶ *Have I sent unto you Timotheus.* Timothy was a favorite disciple of Paul, and his fellow-laborer in the gospel. Acts xvi. 1-3; 2 Tim. i. 1-6. "Timotheus, accompanied by Erastus, left Ephesus for Macedonia. St. Paul desired him, if possible, to continue his journey to Corinth; but did not feel certain that it would be possible for him to do so consistently with the other objects of his journey." He "apparently did not reach Corinth on this occasion, or the fact would have been mentioned, 2 Cor. xii. 18." — *Conybeare.* ¶ *My beloved son.* That is, in the faith, 1 Tim. i. 2. ¶ *Faithful in the Lord.* A faithful disciple, who held fast the faith he had received, "avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith." 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21. ¶ *Of my ways which be in Christ.* Of my ways as a Christian minister, both in doctrine and in conduct. ¶ *As I teach everywhere in every church.* Paul preached the same gospel, and enforced the same moral precepts, in all places. Jesus Christ who was crucified, salvation by the grace of God, and the duty of denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and of living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, were preached uniformly by him, ch. ii. 2; Rom. v. 20, 21; Eph. ii. 8; Tit. ii. 11, 12. He could not abide a time-serving policy, but rebuked it openly. Gal. ii. 11-14. He desired the Corinthians to understand that he required no more of them than of all others, in regard to Christian faith and practice.

18. *Now some are puffed up, &c.* "Some are grown insolent." — *Macknight.* "Some of you have been filled with arrogance." — *Conybeare.*

18 Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and

The reference is to those teachers who claimed superiority over the apostle, and to their deluded followers. Because Paul did not visit Corinth at once, instead of sending a messenger and afterwards writing an epistle, they seem to have imagined that he dared not measure his strength with theirs. They said, "his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." 2 Cor. x. 10. They were so enriched with Jewish traditions and Grecian philosophy, that they imagined he dared not encounter them in argument; and they had great confidence also in their spiritual gifts.

19. *But I will come to you shortly.* He desired them to understand that he had no fear of his adversaries, but that he designed speedily to test their strength. He would exercise his apostolic power, to the confusion of all pretenders. A similar passage is found, 2 Cor. x. 11. ¶ *If the Lord will.* In all his purposes, Paul acknowledged the superintending power of God, without whose permission no event can occur. See note on Rom. i. 10. ¶ *And will know, not the speech, &c.* Not merely their skill in traditions and philosophy; not merely their manner of teaching, in which they profess to excel me; not merely their self-confident boasts. ¶ *But the power.* "The power they have to vindicate their pretensions, and what miraculous proof they can give of that authority in the church, which they presume to oppose to mine."—*Doddridge.* Others give a more general interpretation of the word. "I will see whether they are able to effect what they affirm; whether they have more real power than I have. I will enter fully into the work of discipline, and will ascertain whether they have such authority in the church, such a power of party and of combination, that they can resist me and oppose my administration of the discipline which the church needs."—*Barnes.* The former

will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

interpretation better harmonizes with the spirit of the next verse.

20. *For the kingdom of God.* This phrase is used in the New Testament with various shades of signification. See note on Matt. iii. 2. It here denotes "a new religious economy, instituted by God, and by his special care established and extended in the world, breaking down every opposing power, and assimilating all things to its own peculiar character. This economy we now call, by a name rather vague, the gospel dispensation; but by the ancient Jews it would have been more properly denominated the reign of the Messiah."—*H. Ballou,* 2d. This verse describes the manner in which the reign of the Messiah was established, rather than its intrinsic character. ¶ *Is not in word but in power.* It exists on earth, not by the force of human eloquence, but by the manifestation of divine power; not by the influence of skilfully-arranged theories of philosophy, or by virtue of time-honored traditions, much less by "great swelling words of vanity," 2 Pet. ii. 18, but by the mighty power indicated in the "miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did" by his Son and his apostles. Acts. ii. 22. "It is propagated, saith Theophylact, by miracles done by the power of the spirit; for, to convince men of the truth of it, saith Chrysostom, it is not enough to use fine words, but the dead must be raised, the devils cast out, and other mighty wonders must be wrought; for by these things the gospel is established."—*Whitby.*

21. *What will ye?* Which do you choose? Will you, by persisting in divisions, and contentions, and contempt of my authority, expose yourselves to sharp discipline? Or, by forsaking your evil practices, and submitting to lawful authority, will you become entitled to my approbation? It rested with them, whether the

21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?

apostle's visit should fill them with joy or with mortification. ¶ *Shall I come unto you with a rod?* "The apostle terms the power of punishing obstinate offenders by miracle a *rod*, because it was to be exercised for chastisement. — The opposition which St. Paul met with from the faction at Corinth, led him to speak of his power of punishing obstinate offenders miraculously, as a thing which they knew he possessed. 2 Cor. x. 6; xiii. 2, 10. And as he speaks of it, not for the information of posterity, but to terrify the faction, the evidence of his possessing that power, which arises from his having mentioned it so confidently on this occasion, is very strong." — *Macknight*. See Acts xiii. 9–11. His admonition was not without effect, but led to an abandonment of many evil practices in the Corinthian church, and the repentance of its members. See 2 Cor. ii. 1–4; vii. 6–11. ¶ *In love*. As opposed to severity. As a true disciple of his master, Paul loved even those whom he rebuked; but love manifested in approval and commendation differs in appearance from that which is exhibited in sharp admonition and rebuke. ¶ *And in the spirit of meekness*. In the spirit of a meek and humble follower of the Lamb, rejoicing with his brethren in the blessings of the gospel, and congratulating them on their moral improvement, rather than as the spiritual governor of the church, rebuking them for their departure from the faith, and their indulgence in manifold iniquities.

Here ends the first section of this Epistle, devoted to certain irregularities in the church, which had been reported to the apostle, "by them which are of the house of Chloe," ch. i. 11; especially the divisions and contentions resulting from the influence of false teachers. Although their original reference was specific, the arguments and admonitions are worthy of the careful attention and observance of all who name the name of Christ.

CHAPTER V.

IT is reported commonly that there is fornication among

CHAPTER V.

This chapter is devoted to the reprehension of a grossly immoral offence in the Corinthian church. The offender had not been subjected to proper discipline; and thus the church had become to a certain extent responsible for the offence. It is generally acknowledged that any society, large or small, civil or ecclesiastical, which suffers known sin among its members to pass unrebuked, and which does not use all reasonable means for its abatement, thereby becomes morally responsible for its existence. Upon this principle, the apostle rebukes the whole church for the offence of a part, perhaps a single member; and he admonishes them to cast out any who might be guilty, so that they should not be "partakers of other men's sins." 1 Tim. v. 22.

¶ *It is reported commonly*. It is not merely communicated confidentially, but it has become a matter of public notoriety. It is a thing known, not only among the faithful, who are grieved, but among the heathen, who make it a subject of scandal against the whole Christian church, both at Corinth and elsewhere. ¶ *Fornication among you*. See note on Acts xv. 20. From what follows, it is evident that the reference here is not to unlawful sexual intercourse generally, but to that more gross form of it which is denominated incest. ¶ *And such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles*. Not tolerated by even the heathen. It was expected of Christians that they should be more pure than the Gentiles; else how would the purifying influence of the gospel be manifest? How scandalous, then, as well as criminal, for a Christian to be guilty of a crime of which a Gentile would be ashamed. ¶ *That one should have his father's wife*. "It seems the woman with whom this whoredom was committed was not the guilty person's

you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed

mother, but his step-mother; a sort of incest which was condemned by the Greeks and Romans. — Wherefore, from the Corinthians tolerating this crime, we may infer that the guilty person was of some note among them; perhaps he was one of the teachers of the faction, who being greatly admired for his personal qualifications, had escaped censure by arguing that such marriages were not forbidden by the gospel." — *Macknight*. It is evident from 2 Cor. vii. 12, that it was the wife, not the widow, of his father, whom the guilty person had taken as a wife or concubine; for the apostle there speaks both of him "that had done the wrong," namely the son, and of him "that suffered wrong," by whom he manifestly refers to the father as living when the offence was committed. Such an unnatural connection as that named in the text is styled by Cicero "an unheard of wickedness."

2. *And ye are puffed up.* That is, with pride and arrogance. It can scarcely be supposed that they were so lost to decency as to be proud of the crime committed by one of the brethren. But this crime did not abate their pride. They were as arrogant as before. For some reason they did not think it necessary to rebuke and expel the offender, but continued to associate with him. Some, however, suppose that they were actually proud because of the offence. "But whence proceeded so foolish and wicked a boasting? (1.) Perhaps from the affectation of a party, and the bitterness of their contentions; the adverse party triumphing against that party in which happened so grievous a fall. (2.) Perhaps, by an ill conceit of the liberty of the gospel, they triumphed in this thing, as though the gospel had brought in such a liberty against the law." — *Lightfoot*. "They were puffed

might be taken away from among you.

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed,

up, say the Greek interpreters, on account of the eloquence and wisdom of this very man. Either in your conceit that you have got such a profound teacher, or on account of some high wisdom which makes you look on these things as indifferent." — *Whitby*. ¶ *And have not rather mourned.* The misconduct of a brother or friend occasions mortification and grief. Ch. xii. 26. The expression is here to be understood in a larger sense; it is equivalent to saying, Ye have not been so much grieved as to adopt effectual measures for the purification of the church. A decent regard for their own reputation, and for the good name of Christianity, should have moved them to express their disapprobation of this infamous crime, by expelling the offender at once. So long as they retained him in fellowship, they manifested approval and pride rather than grief and shame. ¶ *That he that hath done this deed.* That hath committed incest. ¶ *Might be taken away from among you.* Might be excommunicated from the church. In this way, and in this only, could they convince the world that they regarded the crime with abhorrence, and not with satisfaction.

3. *For I, verily, as absent in body, &c.* The apostle here intimates that if he were present at Corinth, he would at once exert his apostolic power in cleansing the church from defilement. Being absent, he could only communicate his decision in the case by letter. ¶ *But present in spirit.* He deeply sympathized in the joys and sorrows of his brethren, wherever scattered. 2 Cor. xi. 29. He felt the disgrace which had befallen the Corinthian church, and was grieved by the unrebuked sin which existed in it. Some have understood him to mean that he was able, though absent, to discern the thoughts and acts of his brethren,

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

which called forth this admonition. But we have no evidence that the apostles shared the divine omniscience. Besides, Paul does not profess to have discovered this offence in the church, by spiritual discernment; on the contrary, he says, "it is reported commonly." ¶ *Have judged already.* Or determined what is proper to be done. His judgment is embodied in the next two verses.

4. *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* By his authority, as his disciples. When our Lord established his church, he granted the power of discipline, that its purity might be preserved. Matt. xviii. 15-17. ¶ *When ye are gathered together.* So solemn an act of discipline as expulsion should be performed with due formality. The church should be assembled for the special purpose of examining and deciding. ¶ *And my spirit.* You are to assemble in the name of the Lord; and to act as if I were personally with you. I have given my opinion and advice. Act, then, as you would if I were present. ¶ *With the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This phrase is connected with the following verse. By the power of the Lord Jesus they should deliver the offender to Satan. The act "is to be done by you; and the miraculous power which will be evinced in the case will proceed from the Lord Jesus. The word *power* is used commonly in the New Testament to denote some miraculous and extraordinary power; and here evidently means that the Lord Jesus would put forth such a power in the infliction of pain and for the preservation of the purity of his church." — *Barnes.*

5. *To deliver such a one unto Satan.* To excommunicate him. To give him his proper place with the adversary whom he serves. This excommunication by special apostolical authority carried with it certain physical as well as moral effects, which were miracu-

lous. It is well observed by *Barnes*, that "there is no evidence that this was the usual form of excommunication, nor ought it now to be used. There was evidently miraculous power evinced in this case, and that power has long since ceased in the church." ¶ *For the destruction of the flesh.* Not for the destruction of his life; for he survived, and was re-admitted into the church upon evidence of repentance. 2 Cor. ii. 6-8. We are justified in believing that some bodily ailment followed excommunication in this case, attended by a wasting or emaciation of the flesh, giving visible evidence that he was enduring a penalty. The precise character of the disease we know not; but it is not unreasonable to conjecture that it may have denoted the character of the offence. ¶ *That the spirit may be saved.* That he may be humbled and brought to repentance. Such is the design of punishment or retribution, under the divine administration. Heb. xii. 9-11. ¶ *In the day of the Lord Jesus.* Any visible manifestation of divine power is called the day of the Lord. Such a manifestation would be visible, whenever the penalty inflicted on the offender should result in his repentance and reformation. The following remarks deserve consideration: "It is evident that infant and nascent Christianity, professing to exhibit a kingdom of God upon the earth, with its handful of disciples scattered in the midst of a universal heathenism, could prevail only through a true Christian power breathed forth from the lives of holy and devoted men; and that to let a heathen man, with a heathen heart and a heathen life, be pointed at as an example of a Christian, was at once to destroy the Christian peculiarity, and to confuse the kingdom of Satan with the kingdom of God. — If he acted in Satan's spirit, let him take his place on Satan's side. — That by Satan no allusion was

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

intended to any infernal principle or power, is very evident from the purpose which this committal to Satan was to serve, 'that the spirit might be saved.' And we find exactly the same use of the expression, namely, assigning a man to the adversary's party, to the *worldly* side, if his life were worldly, and for the same remedial purpose, that he might be awakened to a knowledge of his gross inconsistency, in 1 Tim. i. 20." — *Thom.*

6. *Your glorying is not good.* Your boasting is not proper or well-founded. With such corruption in the church, unpunished and unrebuked, boasting was peculiarly indecorous. Especially was this true, if, as many suppose, the offender was one of the teachers, in whom they boasted notwithstanding his guilt. "They had boasted in the false teacher, as one who understood the gospel better than Paul, and who perhaps had defended the incestuous marriage as a matter permitted by the gospel." — *Macknight.* ¶ *Know ye not.* This phrase occurs seven times in this and the succeeding chapter. By its frequent repetition the apostle may have referred ironically to the instructions of those teachers who arrogated superiority to him. As if he had said: With all your boasted advantages, have ye not yet learned this? ¶ *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* See note on Matt. xiii. 33. Leaven, mingled with meal, pervades the whole mass, and assimilates it to itself in character. The phrase is proverbial, and occurs in the same form, Gal. v. 9. "A kind of proverbial speech, intimating that one scandalous offender may infect the whole church, as one scabbed sheep the whole flock: and hereby the apostle declareth another end of excommunication to be, to keep the church sound from infection, to cut off a rotten member, that it gangrene not the whole body." — *Assem. Annot.*

7. *Purge out therefore.* Put aside; cast away; make yourselves free from. ¶ *The old leaven.* The vice and corruption which now infects the church;

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.

the reference is to the excommunication of the incestuous person. In a somewhat similar manner, the term is figuratively applied to hurtful doctrines, Matt. xvi. 6. The figure is taken from the Jewish custom of carefully excluding all leaven from their houses at the celebration of the Passover, when they ate unleavened bread. Exo. xii. 18–20; xiii. 7. Under this figure the apostle urges his brethren to put away all corruption from the church generally, as well as to exclude one offender in particular. Some suppose his figurative language in this and the next verse was adopted because he had used the proverb in ver. 6. Others, quite as naturally, suppose this epistle was written at the season of the Passover, and that both the proverb and what follows it were suggested by the season. In either case, the meaning of the exhortation is sufficiently plain. ¶ *That ye may be a new lump.* That ye may be free from corruption, like a fresh mass of flour, or lump of dough, which has no leaven in it. ¶ *As ye are unleavened.* As ye are bound by your Christian profession to be pure, uncontaminated by corruption. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 3. Such is the general interpretation. But *Conybeare* translates, "Cast out therefore the old leaven, that your body may be renewed throughout, even as now [at this Paschal season] you are without taint of leaven;" and adds this note:—"In spite of the opinion of Chrysostom and some eminent modern commentators, we must adhere to this interpretation; for if we take *καθως εστε αζυμοι* in a metaphorical sense, it is inconsistent with the previous *εκκαθαρατε την παλαιαν ζυμην*; for the passage would then amount to saying, 'Be free from taint as you are free from taint.' Moreover, if so taken, the connection with what follows seems unnatural. There seems no difficulty in supposing that the Gentile Christians joined with the Jewish Christians

For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nei-

in celebrating the Paschal feast after the Jewish manner, at least to this extent. And we see that St. Paul still observed the 'days of unleavened bread' at this period of his life, from Acts xx. 6. Also, from what follows, we perceive how naturally this greatest of Jewish feasts changed into the greatest of Christian festivals." The fact assumed in the former interpretation is undoubtedly true; yet I think the latter more accurately expresses the meaning of the text. ¶ *For even Christ our passover, &c.* The emphatic word is *our*; as the paschal lamb was slain for the Jews, so Christ our passover or paschal lamb, is slain for us, Gentiles as well as Jews; and our houses should equally be made free from all leaven, when keeping the commemorative festival. ¶ *Is sacrificed.* Is slain, ἐτίθη. The word τίθη, in some of its forms, occurs fourteen times in the New Testament, and is translated *kill* eight times, *slay* once, and *sacrifice* five times. It is never used in connection with the death of Christ except in this place. In all the other places where it is translated *sacrifice*, it is applied to heathen rites and ceremonies. Acts xiv. 13, 18; 1 Cor. x. 20. It is difficult to perceive by what process it can here be made to denote what is often termed an *atonement* sacrifice. There is no doubt, however, that the death of Christ was designed for the benefit of men, and therefore should be gratefully regarded as the crowning evidence of divine love. See notes on John xv. 13; Rom. viii. 32. ¶ *For us.* Commentators generally say, For us who are Christians. A higher authority says, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." John xii. 32. "God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom. v. 8. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of

ther with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

God should taste death for every man." Heb. ii. 9.

8. *Therefore let us keep the feast.* This form of expression refers to the paschal feast of the Jews, and, as some suppose, has special reference to the great Christian festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of our Lord. See note on ver. 7. ¶ *Not with the old leaven.* Namely, of vice and corruption, as in ver. 7, probably with special reference to the offence named in the previous verses. ¶ *Neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness.* Of ill-will to men and disobedience to God, — or a violation of either of the two great commandments in the divine law. Matt. xxii. 35–40. All such corrupting principles and actions should be banished from the heart as thoroughly as leaven was excluded from the dwellings of the Jews during the Passover. ¶ *But with the unleavened, &c.* That is, with sincerity and truth. Let your thoughts and conduct be as pure from sin, as the paschal bread is free from leaven. Avoid the leaven of false teachers, both in word and deed; let them corrupt neither your faith nor your morals. "Do ye therefore consecrate yourselves to the service of Christ, by reforming all your sinful courses, particularly that of uncleanness and villiany, ver. 13, and by the practice of all Christian purity, and holding fast the truth which hath been delivered to you." — *Hammond.*

9. *I wrote unto you in an epistle.* Commentators are much divided in opinion, whether Paul here refers to the former part of this epistle, or to another previously written and now lost. The reasons for and against each opinion have been stated at great length by their several advocates. Without attempting to restate them, I venture to express the opinion, that the most obvious sense of the passage, namely, that a previous epistle had been written, is probably the true one.

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators:

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world,

Paul refers to the present epistle in like manner, 2 Cor. vii. 8. And as *Barnes* has well stated the fact, "It is not true that Paul had in any former part of this epistle given this direction. He had commanded them to remove an incestuous person, and such a command might seem to imply that they ought not to keep company with such a person; but it was not a general command *not* to have intercourse with them." ¶ *Not to company, &c.* Not to associate with them. This direction had been partially misunderstood; and it is explained and limited in its application in the succeeding verses.

10. *Yet not altogether, &c.* "However not universally." — *Macknight*. "I meant not altogether to bid you forego intercourse with the men who may be fornicators, &c.; for so you would be forced to go utterly out of the world." — *Conybeare*. The command referred specifically to intercourse with professed Christians who were not worthy of the name, ver. 11, and not generally to the heathen world. ¶ *Fornicators of this world*. Persons out of the church, not professing to be Christians. Corinth was notorious throughout the world, for the practice of the vice here indicated. See note on Acts xviii. 1. If the Christians might have no intercourse whatever with such persons, they could not well pursue their customary avocations of labor or traffic, but must utterly forsake the world. ¶ *Or with the covetous*. The avaricious; those desiring to obtain improperly the possessions of others. ¶ *Or extortioners*. Those who not only desired but obtained the goods of others improperly and unjustly; oppressors of the weak and unprotected. ¶ *Or with idolaters*. Worshipers of idols, as all the Corinthians were, before conversion. ¶ *For then must ye needs, &c.* The world abounds with such people; especially that part of it where you dwell; and

or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11 But now I have written

if you may have no association with such, it would be necessary for you to leave the world. This was not what the apostle intended by the command referred to in ver. 9. Such a rule would be impracticable; moreover, it would be inconsistent with the example of our Lord, who associated with publicans and sinners so far as to labor for their good. Hence he was superciliously styled by the Pharisees the friend of publicans and sinners. Luke vii. 34. Christians were at liberty to associate with their heathen neighbors, for their own convenience, in the ordinary transactions or common courtesies of life, and it was their duty to associate with them, so far as good advice and earnest entreaty might wean them from idolatry and iniquity. They were not, however, to associate even with these, in such a manner as to countenance their idolatrous faith or infamous deeds, or in any manner to become partakers of their sins.

11. *But now I have written to you*. In this epistle I have more fully explained what you formerly misunderstood. What you understood generally I intended to apply specifically to members of the church. ¶ *Not to keep company*. To have no intercourse with such a one, which can by any possibility be construed into approval of his conduct. ¶ *If any man that is called a brother*. Any professing Christian; any member of the church. As the children of one Father, all men are indeed brethren. But the word is here used in a technical sense, indicating brotherhood in the church. ¶ *Be a fornicator*. See ver. 1. The apostle here returns to the special subject of their duty to purify the church by expelling this offender. ¶ *Or covetous*. See ver. 10. ¶ *Or an idolater*. It would seem that some who professed Christianity continued to unite with the heathen in their idolatrous rites, and "with conscience of the idol" joined

unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a

drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are with-

in partaking of meat "as a thing offered unto an idol," ch. viii. 7. Either they were hypocrites who were unworthy of fellowship, or weak brethren who should be reclaimed or set aside. ¶ *Or a railer.* One given to reproachful and bitter language, regardless of its truth. ¶ *Or a drunkard.* "Perhaps there might have been some then in the church, as there are now, who were addicted to this vice. It has been the source of incalculable evils to the church; and the apostle therefore solemnly enjoins it on Christians to have no fellowship with a man who is intemperate." — *Barnes.* ¶ *With such a one no not to eat.* To eat together was considered a token of more intimate friendship than merely to treat each other courteously in the common affairs of life. Christians were forbidden to eat with such unworthy brethren as are here described, because they would be supposed to tolerate or even to approve their infamous conduct. Much more, they were not to admit such to the communion of the Lord's supper, to which many commentators suppose the apostle had special reference. The reason of the distinction here made between the heathen and professed Christians, as to the degree of companionship allowable with either, is very obvious. In regard to the heathen, common courtesy was in no danger of being regarded as an evidence of fellowship; for the Christians openly opposed and denounced paganism and all its vicious practices. But in regard to their own brotherhood, if they allowed one whose life was corrupt to remain in their fellowship and treated him as a friend and companion, they would be understood to recognize him as a true Christian. How, then, could they repel the taunt, "What do ye more than others?" How could they defend the church from the charges of corruption, so persistently urged by their enemies? A decent self-respect as

well as regard for the honor of the church, required them to discountenance the unworthy. How far this rule is binding on us at the present time, since the profession of Christianity has become so general and honorable rather than disgraceful, is a question upon which a difference of opinion exists. No danger is now incurred by treating such persons with civility, or by eating with them; certainly, not by ministering to their relief when in distress. This, however, should be so done as not to imply our approbation of their misdeeds, or an acknowledgment that they manifest a Christian spirit. And hence, the communion table should be guarded from their approach. Infamous conduct, such as the apostle describes, furnishes as good reason now for excommunication as when he wrote. And in the ordinary affairs of life, "a conscientious Christian should choose, as far as he can, the company, intercourse, and familiarity of good men, and such as fear God; and avoid, as far as his necessary affairs will permit, the conversation and fellowship of such as St. Paul here describes." — *Wall.*

12. *For what have I to do, &c.* I have no jurisdiction over any except those who have acknowledged their subjection to Christ and his gospel. ¶ *To judge.* To pass sentence upon. ¶ *Them also that are without.* Not members of the church. Some suppose that particular reference is made to the guilty woman, ver. 1, who was probably a heathen, and concerning whose excommunication nothing has been said. ¶ *Do not ye judge them that are within?* Your jurisdiction extends to all who have entered your fold, even without special direction from me. Have you not already cast out some unworthy members? Why, then, hesitate in a case of such gross enormity? God will judge them who are without, ver. 13. It is your business to keep your own church free

out? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

from corruption. Some commentators interpret this passage differently. "For why is power granted me to judge concerning them also that are without? that is, by my apostolic authority to strike even a heathen with some divine plague, if he be incurably an enemy and blasphemer of the gospel; which I did to Elymas, &c. Why is this granted me, but to cut off such as are past cure? And do not you also, within your own sphere, judge those who are within? But now those that are without, which I thus judge and smite, God judgeth and smites, and by his vengeance gives his suffrage to my censure. Therefore, put away; in like manner, you also, doing what lies in you, may take away this man and other such wicked persons by that hand of God." — *Lightfoot*. The former interpretation, however, appears more natural.

13. *But them that are without God judgeth.* They are not within your jurisdiction. They are not subject to your ecclesiastical laws. Nevertheless they are responsible at a higher tribunal. God will render to every man according to his deeds, whether they be good or evil, Rom. ii. 6, 12. ¶ *Therefore.* Because you have authority over those who are within. ¶ *Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.* Excommunicate him, and hold no intercourse with him which can be construed into a recognition of him as a Christian. *That wicked person* is the offender named in ver. 1; but the same rule applies to those who were guilty of other notorious offences, ver. 11. It should be observed, that the apostle does not direct the exercise of this highest power of the church, upon mere suspicion of guilt. The secrets of a man's heart are known to no other man, ch. ii. 11; and if an unworthy person retain his connection with the church and approach the

CHAPTER VI.

DARE any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

table of the Lord, he does so at his own hazard, ch. xi. 29. God knoweth the heart, and he will render a just retribution for secret sins. The church may not safely interfere, lest it should misjudge. But in regard to open violators of the divine law, the injunction in the text should be obeyed by every church that regards its duty to God, or its duty to itself; to God, that the honor of his gospel may be vindicated; to itself, lest the leaven of corruption should infect the whole body.

CHAPTER VI.

A new subject, yet perhaps not wholly new, is here introduced by the apostle; namely, the custom of appealing to the heathen courts for the settlement of personal differences. Some suppose the apostle was led to a discussion of this subject by what he had just said concerning the jurisdiction of the church being limited to its own members. "The Christians were not to erect themselves into judges over the heathen, but it was yet more inconsistent that they who were one day to judge the world with Christ, should set the heathen as judges over themselves." — *Olshausen*. Even a more close connection with the former chapter has been suggested. "Thus visibly runs St. Paul's argument, ch. v. 12, 13, vi. 1-3, &c., coherent and easy to be understood, if it stood together as it should, and were not chopped in pieces by a division into two chapters. Ye have a power to judge those who are of your church; therefore put away from among you that fornicator; you do ill to let it come before a heathen magistrate. Are you, who are to judge the world and angels, not worthy to judge such a matter as this?" — *Locke*. It may be urged in behalf of this interpretation, that from ver. 9-20 it is evident

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye un-

that the subject of ch. v. was still in the apostle's mind. The more general connection, however, is quite as likely to be the only one which actually exists.

1. *Dare any of you.* This question implies the impropriety of appealing to heathen tribunals. It is equivalent to saying, Will you venture to violate the principles of the gospel which you profess to believe? ¶ *Having a matter.* A controversy, whether in regard to property, reputation, domestic relations, or aught else. "There may be differences between men in regard to property and right, in which there shall be no blame on either side. They may both be desirous of having it equitably and amicably adjusted. It is not a *difference* between men that is in itself wrong: but it is the spirit with which the difference is adhered to, and the unwillingness to have justice done that is so often wrong." — *Barnes.* ¶ *Against another.* Another Christian, or member of the church, as the connection manifestly implies. If the controversy were with a heathen, adjudication by the church would not be submitted to by him. ¶ *Go to law.* Appeal to the courts of law. This admonition is to the party commencing proceedings, who chose his own tribunal. ¶ *Before the unjust.* This is not to be understood as a charge against the justice and integrity of heathen magistrates. "The heathens are called unrighteous, in the same sense that Christians are called saints or holy. For as the latter were called saints, not on account of the real sanctity of their manners, but on account of their professed faith, so the former were called unrighteous on account of their idolatry and unbelief, ver. 6, although many of them were remarkable for their regard to justice, and to all the duties of morality." — *MacKnight.* The impropriety consisted, not in appealing to heathen judges, who might be individually honest and just, but in declining the jurisdiction of Christian men, and preferring the judgment of those whose hearts had

not been brought under the influence of the gospel. ¶ *And not before the saints.* Before the church, or before some of its members as arbitrators. "It should be remembered that the law gave its sanction to the decision pronounced in a litigated case by arbitrators privately chosen; so that Christians might obtain a just decision of their mutual differences without resorting to the heathen tribunals." — *Conybeare.* Many authorities in proof of this fact are quoted by *Stanley.*

2. *Know ye not.* Have not your favorite teachers instructed you thus far? See note on ch. v. 6. ¶ *That the saints shall judge the world.* What our Lord promised to his apostles, Matt. xix. 28, is here affirmed substantially concerning the whole body of Christians. See notes on Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 29-30. To the saints, or to the church, was committed a gospel, by whose principles the whole world must ultimately be judged. The eternal principles of justice and equity therein revealed furnished a criterion by which all opinions and all actions should be adjudged right or wrong. If, then, the Corinthian Christians had accepted that gospel, and comprehended its principles, were they not competent to decide the questions which arose among themselves? "Here St. Paul told the Corinthians, that, agreeably to Christ's promise to the apostles, Matt. xix. 28, they were at that time actually *judging* or ruling the world by the laws of the gospel which they preached to the world. Hence Christ told his apostles, John xii. 31, 'now is the judgment of this world.' But Bengelius says *κοινοῦσαι* is the future tense, and signifies *shall judge*; and that the apostle had in his eye the state of the world under Constantine, when the Christians got possession of civil power. This interpretation is mentioned by Whitby likewise. Nevertheless, the subsequent clause, 'If the world *κοινοῦσαι* is judged by you, shows, I think, that the apostle spake of the time then present. Others, because the judgment of angels

worthy to judge the smallest matters?

is spoken of in the next verse, interpret this of the last judgment; and by the saints judging the world they understand the affording matter for condemning the wicked. But this sense has no relation to the apostle's argument. With respect to the idea which many entertain, of the saints being Christ's assessors when he judges the world, I observe that it is repugnant to all the accounts given of the general judgment; and particularly to our Lord's own account of that great event, Matt. xxv., where the righteous are represented as all standing before his tribunal along with the wicked, and as receiving their sentence at the same time with them. Besides, for what purpose are the saints to be Christ's assessors at the judgment? Is it to give him counsel? or only to assent to the sentence he will pass on the wicked? Surely not the former; and for the latter, why should their assent be necessary, more than the assent of the holy angels? To found a doctrine of this magnitude merely on two obscure passages of scripture, which can easily admit of a different and better interpretation, seems not a little rash." — *Mac-knight*. Another meaning is indicated thus: — "Noesseltus rightly suggests that the word *κρίνειν* may signify the faculty of judging, so that the sense may be, 'the saints are able to judge the world.' This place may be illustrated by ch. ii. 13, 16, where Paul says that Christians are able to judge concerning the heathen, that is, to know their errors in matters pertaining to religion." — *Rosenmuller*. I prefer, however, the interpretation first given. ¶ *Are ye unworthy*. Are ye not qualified? ¶ *To judge the smallest matters?* The matters of difference among yourselves. If you have knowledge of those great principles which will give solution to all possible questions of right and wrong in the whole world, can you not decide comparatively small questions?

3. *Know ye not that we shall judge angels*. It is the almost unanimous opinion of commentators that the apos-

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much

tle here refers to an order of beings higher than men; some including both good and bad angels, and others only the bad. These, the saints are to be in some way concerned in judging. But this interpretation is attended by many difficulties. (1.) The word *ἄγγελος*, angel, occurs nearly two hundred times in the New Testament, sometimes denoting human messengers, and sometimes a higher order of beings. Yet if this place give any intimation that the lower order shall judge the higher, it is the only one of the kind. It is not probable that a doctrine so important, if true, should be stated only once, and even then incidentally. (2.) The apostle speaks of this fact as already well known to the Corinthians. Whence did they derive that knowledge? Certainly not from any testimony of Christ or his apostles, now extant, if angelic beings are intended, for the reason already stated. (3.) There is no evidence that the angels judge each other; but the contrary, if the language in Jude 9 refer to that order of beings, which surely will not be disputed by those who believe in fallen angels: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." If the archangel dared not judge his inferior, — or at the most, his equal, — we may well doubt whether men shall judge their superiors. (4.) If it be said, the apostle simply means that the saints shall be assessors in this judgment, that "Christians will be qualified to see the justice of even the sentence which is pronounced on fallen angels," it may be inquired, what advantage can result from such co-operation? and what connection has this supposed fact with the apostle's argument? See *Mac-knight*, quoted in note on ver. 2. But it is not necessary to suppose the apostle referred to beings superior to many who are often styled *angels* in the scriptures. *Schleusner* says this word means, (1.) generally, any one who

more things that pertain to this life?

4 If then ye have judgments

conveys the command of one person to others, an ambassador, a messenger. Matt. xi. 10; Luke vii. 24; ix. 52. (2.) A spectator, or an explorer. 1 Cor. xi. 10; Jas. ii. 25, doubtless parallel with Heb. xi. 31. (3.) Any interpreter of the divine will, a minister of the divine word, a doctor and ruler of the church. Gal. iv. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Rev. i. 20; ii. 1, 8, 12, 18; iii. 1. (4.) A higher order of beings are called angels, Matt. iv. 6, 11, &c. (5.) A tutelary spirit. Matt. xviii. 10; Acts xii. 15. (6.) Any one exalted to great power and dignity, a prince, a magistrate. Rom. viii. 38; 1 Cor. vi. 3. (7.) The word angel is often added to other words, to enhance the excellency of the thing described. Acts vi. 15. (8.) The word is sometimes not expressed but understood. Acts xix. 31: 'And certain — sent unto him (that is, angels or messengers), desiring,' &c. Among the several meanings of this word, it will be perceived that *Schleusner* refers to the text as an instance of its use to indicate any one exalted to great power and dignity, a prince, a magistrate. And this is its true meaning, beyond all reasonable doubt. See note on Luke x. 18. The argument of the apostle runs thus: You have embraced a gospel, by whose principles, as a criterion of right and wrong, mankind generally shall be judged; can you not then judge accurately in common affairs? Yea, the highest among men, magistrates and rulers, both civil and ecclesiastical, are to be judged by the same principles; and can ye not apply them to the ordinary questions between brethren? Paul himself was conscious of this power, and did not hesitate to use it. Eph. vi. 12; see also Gal. ii. 11-14, where he applied this rule of right to the conduct of a fellow-apostle. ¶ *How much more.* If the eternal principles of the gospel are a rule by which the highest functions of rulers in state or in church may be judged, how much more are they suf-

ficient for the ordinary affairs of life. ¶ *That pertain to this life.* This phrase is the translation of a single word, βιωτικά, and refers to food and raiment, things necessary to the preservation of life. This word occurs elsewhere only in ver. 4, and Luke xxi. 34; but βίος, from the same root, is translated *living* in Mark xii. 44; Luke viii. 43; xvi. 12, 30; xxi. 4, indicating livelihood, or means of living. The idea is, the common every-day affairs of life. If Christians were able to decide whether the conduct of civil rulers and ecclesiastical dignitaries was conformable to the rule of rectitude revealed in the gospel, much more might they apply that rule to the more plain and simple questions which arose in their ordinary transactions.

4. *If then ye have judgments, &c.* Questions or controversies; matters requiring a decision. ¶ *Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.* Various interpretations have been given of this passage. Some understand it as a declaration, not as a command, and say it means, you refer it to judges who are least esteemed by the church, that is, to the unbelieving heathen. Others regard it as a command, and interpret it thus: Refer such cases to the members of the church, all of whom are despised by the heathen as weak and foolish. Ch. i. 27, 28. Others, thus: Rather than carry such questions before heathen courts, submit them to the decision of even the least competent, the weakest, and most ignorant of your own brethren. Others, thus: Reserve higher questions, such as relate to civil or ecclesiastical jurisprudence, for the consideration of your wisest men, and leave these minor, ordinary matters to the decisions of those who are less highly esteemed in the church. Of these several interpretations, the first appears best to harmonize with the next verse, which seems to imply that able and wise men in the church should be selected as judges.

5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

5. *I speak to your shame.* It is a mortifying fact, if you have not among you a single man capable of judging in such matters. By going before heathen courts you seem to acknowledge such destitution, and you ought to be ashamed of it. ¶ *Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you?* &c. Is it possible, that in a church, proud of its spiritual gifts, enriched by Jewish traditions and Grecian philosophy, and glorying in teachers superior even to the apostles, not a single wise man can be found capable of deciding the comparatively trivial questions which arise among you? Such an appeal might well put them to shame; especially when they considered that they had not hesitated to decide upon the claims of rival teachers to superiority in spiritual gifts and graces, and even to judge concerning Paul's authority and faithfulness as an apostle. Ch. iv. 3. They had not hesitated to judge angels: they ought surely to be ashamed if they could not decide the claims of common men.

6. *But brother goeth to law, &c.* That is, before heathen tribunals, instead of submitting their differences to the arbitration of impartial brethren, who might combine justice with equity, according to the principles of the gospel. Such a mode of settlement was allowable under the laws of the land. "That the Jews had now lived by their own laws under the Roman empire, is clearer than to need demonstration. And, the Gemarists being witnesses, judgment in money matters, or in things pertaining to this life, was not taken from them before the times of Simcon Ben Jochai. Now, I would have you tell me, whether the same things were not allowed the Jews converted to Christianity. Let us take an example in this Corinthian church. It consisted of Jews and Gentiles now converted. The Jews, while they believed not, had in their

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, be-

synagogues the bench of three, who judged concerning things pertaining to this life; and that by permission of the Roman empire. Now, they were translated into a Christian synagogue, or congregation, and with them Gentiles who believed. Was that denied them by the Romans in a Christian congregation, which was granted them in a synagogue?" — *Lightfoot.*

7. *There is utterly a fault among you.* "A falling short of Christian proportion; a gap in the full complement of Christian virtues." — *Stanley.* The word ἑρρημα, *fault*, occurs once more in Rom. xi. 12, and is there translated *diminishing*. The idea conveyed by it is a lack of completeness or of perfection; and, as here used, criminality is implied. ¶ *That ye go to law, &c.* That is, before heathen courts, as before mentioned. It is not charged as a fault, that Christians sought to obtain their just and equitable rights; for this the apostle substantially approved by advising a reference of disputes to the decision of their brethren. The fault was, they did not seek redress in a proper manner. They made their contentions public, when they might have been settled privately, and without giving the heathen an occasion of reproach against them. Moreover, they seemed to slight the principles and the professors of the gospel, when they appealed to law administered by heathen judges. ¶ *Why do ye not rather take wrong, &c.* Our Saviour taught his disciples to submit to wrong patiently, rather than exhibit a revengeful spirit. And the apostle charges it as a fault of his brethren, that they were so impatient of wrong as to adopt unjustifiable means of redress. Not only were they bound as Christians to exercise a forbearing spirit, so long as the wrong was tolerable, but they were also bound to avoid bringing additional scandal on the church; and then, as now, the

cause ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not

church suffered reproach, when its members were contentious and quarrelsome, and full of bitterness. ¶ *To be defrauded.* To be unjustly deprived of property. This should be borne patiently, to any tolerable extent, and all reasonable efforts made for an amicable settlement, before resorting to the legal tribunal. And because the Corinthian Christians had not done so, the apostle tells them they were utterly in fault. To what extent Christians are now bound by the directions given to the church at Corinth, deserves consideration. It may be remarked (1.) that we are not under the jurisdiction of heathen laws or tribunals; and consequently one disgraceful feature of law-suits is removed. Nevertheless, under ordinary circumstances, "Christian brethren ought not to carry their disputes with each other concerning their rights before the authorities; should any difference of the kind unfortunately arise, let them at least settle it by way of composition, to avoid giving subject for public offence."—*Olshausen.* Not only does the church suffer, when its members contend before even Christian courts, but the individual who is often found at the legal bar, who is often a party to a suit at law, soon loses the character of a quiet and peaceable Christian, and comes to be regarded as a troublesome member of society. Better might he suffer a little in his property than much in his reputation. But (2.) there is a limit to this rule. Paul himself did not regard it as wrong to appeal even to a heathen tribunal for justice, in a case of extreme emergency; and hence he appealed to Cæsar. Acts xxv. 10, 11. Much more may Christians now invoke the protection of Christian laws, in urgent cases. We are not under obligation to slight the blessings of God, nor to permit them to be wrongfully wrested from us, since he has established a magistracy "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." 1 Pet. ii. 14.

rather *suffer yourselves* to be defrauded?

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and

If an oppressor attempt to take away the means God has granted me for the support of myself and family; if he attempt to deprive me of that family, by destroying life or liberty; if he filch from me the good name which is more valuable to me than worldly goods; if he seek to destroy my life; in these, and such like cases, I am not aware of any rule in the gospel, when rightly interpreted, which prohibits me from using the means which God has provided for protection from harm. I may seek redress by personal expostulation, or by reference to arbitrators; and, in all cases which admit of it, I am doubtless bound to make trial of either or both, before resorting to more stringent measures. I may appeal for redress to the constituted legal tribunals, which are established for the protection of life, liberty, reputation, and property; and, in extreme cases, as in a murderous attack on myself or family, I may use the physical strength which God has bestowed upon me, for self-protection. See note on Matt. v. 39. Such resistance to evil, not through a spirit of retaliation or revenge, but through a desire to preserve what God has bestowed, and with a proper regard for the rights of others, and a willingness to forgive them, in my judgment, does not violate the divine law.

8. *Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud.* This was a more grievous fault than that mentioned in ver. 7. Instead of "taking wrong" and being "defrauded," in a patient spirit, they actually wronged and defrauded others. This may be understood in a general sense; or it may be supposed to mean that they used the heathen courts of law, for unjust and improper purposes. The connection in which the words stand gives probability to the latter interpretation. ¶ *And that your brethren.* That is, fellow-members of the church. "The offence in such cases is aggravated, not because it is in itself any worse to injure a Christian than another man, but because it shows a

defraud, and that *your* brethren.

9 Know ye not that the un-

deeper depravity, when a man overcomes all the ties of kindness and love, and injures those who are near to him, than it does where no such ties exist." — *Barnes*. Moreover, if the reference be to legal wrong, or wrong inflicted under color of law, it was less excusable to call a fellow-Christian before a heathen court, when he might be willing to refer the controversy to the decision of his brethren, ver. 5, than to pursue the same course with an unbeliever, who would not submit to such arbitration.

9. *Know ye not, &c.* "The remonstrance is strengthened by reminding them of the character of the kingdom of God, which, as a kingdom of righteousness and purity, rejects all unrighteousness. In the enumeration of the many forms of sin which exclude from the kingdom of God, he passes beyond the immediate subject before him; this would only have given him occasion to name the *thieves*, the *covetous* and the *extortioners*. But while referring to what precedes and what follows, he also mentions all descriptions of immoral excesses." — *Olschhausen*. Others understand the eight previous verses as a digression, to which the apostle was led by his reference to judgments among the heathen, ch. v. 12, 13; the connection there being, — if we do not undertake to judge "them that are without," neither should we be judged by them, nor appeal to their laws. In this view of the subject, the apostle is understood here to resume the argument, broken off at the end of ch. v. by this digression; in which case the connection is, excommunicate the incestuous person, ch. v. 13; for do you not know that such as he are not fit for the kingdom of God? As the remainder of the chapter relates chiefly to this and kindred vices, the argument in this and the succeeding verses seems more applicable to ch. v. 13, then to ver. 8: and the theory of an intermediate digression is very probable. Such digressions are frequent in

righteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived: neither fornicators nor

the writings of this apostle. ¶ *That the unrighteous*. Such as are specified in the remainder of this verse and in the next. ¶ *Shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. Most commentators understand this to imply a final exclusion from holiness and happiness in the future life. But the apostle expressly declares in ver. 11, that the Corinthian Christians had formerly been thus *unrighteous*; yet they had been purified and had already entered the kingdom, in this world, and he gives no intimation that they should be excluded from the higher glory of the future. Hence it is admitted by some, that even such unrighteous persons may obtain admission to the kingdom, upon repentance. "Namely, except they repent, and leave off to be such any more, as the following verse imports." — *Dutch Annot.* "The kingdom of heaven is not to be hoped for by those who have been guilty of such sins, unless they shall expiate them by true repentance." — *Calmct.* And this is doubtless true. Whether by "kingdom of God" be understood a state of perfect holiness and happiness hereafter, or the reign of Christ and its blessings on earth (see note on Matt. iii. 2), the unrighteous cannot enter into its enjoyment, while their unrighteousness continues. They must first repent, reform, be purified, cleansed, and made holy. Indeed mere outward purity will not suffice for admission to the kingdom. Purity of heart also is indispensable. See note on Matt. v. 20. But when the wicked forsakes his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and returns unto the Lord, he shall receive mercy and be abundantly pardoned. Isa. lv. 7. He shall then inherit the kingdom. Whether all shall thus repent, and be purified and admitted, is a question discussed elsewhere. It is sufficient here to say that "every sin may be repented of under the gospel dispensation." — *Clarke*. ¶ *Be not deceived*. Either by false teachers, or by your own imaginations. ¶ *Neither*

idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous,

fornicators, &c. Such as had been described in ch. v., whose excommunication was directed, and whose case gave occasion for this discussion. ¶ *Nor idolaters.* See note on ch. v. 11. Many of the idolatrous rites were closely connected with that kind of licentiousness which is here the special subject of apostolic rebuke. See note on Rom. i. 26, 27. ¶ *Nor adulterers.* See note on Matt. v. 27–32. ¶ *Nor effeminate.* This may be understood to mean those who are self-indulgent and voluptuous; unable to bear hardships or self-denial. It may also mean those “who suffered themselves to be abused by men, contrary to nature. Hence they are joined here with sodomites, the name given to those who abused them.” — *Macknight.* This interpretation is justified by the connection in which the word is used. ¶ *Nor abusers, &c.* Sodomites. See note on Rom. i. 27.

10. *Nor thieves, nor covetous.* Those who improperly take or desire what belongs to others. ¶ *Nor drunkards.* “It may seem strange that drunkards should be comprehended with those guilty of far greater crimes. But in fact, vices go in clusters; and it is very rare to find drunkenness unattended with one or more of the other vices.” — *Bloomfield.* ¶ *Nor revilers.* The same word which is translated *railer* in ch. v. 11. ¶ *Nor extortioners.* See note on ch. v. 11. ¶ *Shall inherit, &c.* See note on ver. 9. What is there affirmed of the unrighteous generally is here particularly applied. I have followed the general current of interpretation in regard to the several vices specified in ver. 9, 10. But *Hammond* interprets them all as intimately connected with idolatrous licentiousness. The *covetous* he regards as inordinate lusts, the *revilers* as those guilty of disgraceful conduct, rather than of disgraceful words, and the *extortioners* as those who gratify their lusts by violence. “So that all (says he) that are mentioned here will

nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of

be reducible to the same head, of sins of uncleanness or incontinence, save only that of drunkenness, which, as another heathen rite and sensual sin, is fitly joined with them.” He quotes many authorities for this interpretation of the several words; and if it be taken as the true interpretation, the apostle’s argument will appear even more direct and forcible.

11. *And such were some of you.* Corinth was notorious even among heathen cities, for the practice of the vices enumerated in ver. 9, 10. Idolatry, as practiced in that city, is thus described by a judicious writer:—“Idolaters are put at the head of this catalogue of gross sinners, because among the heathens idolatry was not only a great crime in itself, but because it was the parent of many other crimes. For the heathens were encouraged in the commission of fornication, adultery, sodomy, drunkenness, theft, &c., by the example of the idol Gods.” — *Macknight.* The church at Corinth was gathered from such unpromising materials. Its members had formerly been thus debauched and degraded. They were generally of the common people. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” 1 Tim. i. 15; and of those who had been such the church was necessarily composed. “It was not with the prospect of collecting *saints*, that the apostles went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom. None but *sinner*s were to be found over the face of the earth; they preached that sinners might be converted unto God, made *saints*, and constituted into a church; and this was the effect, as well as the object, of their preaching.” — *Clarke.* And since the sin of lasciviousness, against which the apostle here testifies, was that which peculiarly characterized Corinth, he might well say, “And such were some of you.” ¶ *But ye are washed.* Ye are cleansed; that is, from the pollution of lasciviousness, before described, and generally

you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord

from moral defilement. Of course, this is to be understood in a modified sense. Perfect purity is not the lot of humanity; it is to be expected only when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption. But the divine spirit, through the gospel, commences the purifying process in the present life; and its effects had been experienced by the brethren in the Corinthian church. Far as they yet were from moral perfection, a great improvement was visible in them; and to this the text refers. In the form of expression, allusion is made to baptism. See also Eph. v. 26; Tit. iii. 5. The purification, however, had been effected by the spirit, of which the washing by water was only an emblem. See 1 Pet. iii. 21. ¶ *But ye are sanctified.* To sanctify is to set apart to a holy use. See note on John x. 36. "By their profession of the gospel, the Corinthians were separated from idolaters, and consecrated to the service of God; a meaning of the word sanctified often to be found in scripture." — *Macknight*. It also denotes the purifying influence of the holy spirit upon the human heart, whereby men become not only ceremonially but actually devoted to a holy service, and inspired with holy affections. See note on Rom. xv. 16. This sanctification had been wrought, to some extent, in the brethren at Corinth, through faith in the gospel. Acts xv. 9. ¶ *But ye are justified.* Made just, or comparatively free from sin. See note, end of Rom. ch. iii. ¶ *In the name of the Lord Jesus.* This is generally supposed to refer chiefly to the word *washed*, the first term in this threefold process, and to allude to the form of words used in baptism; baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified and justified by the divine spirit. Some, however, understand the apostle to mean that the whole process was accomplished through the Lord Jesus, by his power and authority. ¶ *And by the spirit of our God.* By the agency of the divine spirit on the heart. Here as elsewhere

Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

12 All things are lawful unto

Paul ascribes the work of salvation from sin, whether here or hereafter, to the grace of God. The Corinthians had not wrought their partial deliverance from idolatry, with its sad train of vices, by their own power or exertions. They had not washed, sanctified, and justified themselves. The work had been performed by a higher power, on which all sinners are dependent for deliverance from bondage and the bestowment of liberty. The argument here is, that none could be considered worthy of the advantages enjoyed by the Corinthian church, who should practise the vices from which they had been delivered; that it was highly inconsistent with their professions of discipleship that they should have any fellowship with such works of darkness; Eph. v. 11; 2 Pet. ii. 20-22, and that therefore they ought forthwith to expel "that wicked person," ch. v. 13, and let him be henceforth unto them "as a heathen man and a publican," Matt. xviii. 17, until by thorough repentance he should become worthy of forgiveness and reinstatement. 2 Cor. ii. 6-8.

12. *All things are lawful unto me.* These "seem to be the apostle's own words, quoted as an argument against him; as if it was, 'True, I have said all things are in my power, but it is no less true that all things are not accordant with the interests of our nature.' It is evident that 'all things are lawful' was his watchword of Christian liberty, intelligible, with proper qualifications, but easily perverted. From what follows, both immediately in ver. 13-20, and in ch. viii., x., it would seem that this saying had reference to the great casuistical question which occupied the attention of all Gentile Christians, namely, the lawfulness or unlawfulness of eating sacrificial food. And the transition from an assertion of the indifference of this to an assertion of the indifference of the sins of sensuality, strange as it may now seem, was more natural then, from the licentious rites so frequently connected

me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not

with idolatrous worship; an indifference nowhere greater than at Corinth, as may be seen from the quotations in Wetstein on ch. i. 1. Accordingly, in the decree of the apostles at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 29, this was made the ground of the joint prohibition of 'things offered to idols and of fornication.' Such also was the confusion implied in the error of the Nicolaitans, who held the teaching of Balaam, 'to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication,' Rev. ii. 14." — *Stanley*. It has been supposed by many, that the apostle here makes a transition to a subject foreign to that which he has been discussing. The foregoing note recognizes the fact that the two subjects were intimately connected in his mind, and would readily suggest themselves as illustrations of each other. And this will sufficiently account for the apparent connection of the two in what follows. Nothing really foreign to the main subject is introduced. This "watchword of Christian liberty," here quoted against Paul, is to be understood "with proper qualifications." He surely did not believe it was lawful, or within his liberty, to blaspheme God, or to commit any other known sin. It was chiefly in regard to the requirements of the ritual law, abolished by the gospel, and in opposition to the Judaizing teachers, that he asserted and maintained this liberty. In regard to things indifferent in themselves, he claimed the right, under the gospel, to be governed by his own sense of propriety or expediency. For example, he maintained the lawfulness of eating meats which had been sacrificed to idols, if eaten in a proper manner. This subject is discussed in ch. x., and is alluded to in this place. See ver. 13. And this was according to the general principle that God has provided all things for our use, and it is lawful for us to use them. 1 Tim. iv. 4. Paul here supposes his own "watchword" to be quoted against him by those who

be brought under the power of any.

13 Meats for the belly, and

would justify or excuse the offence which he had condemned; and proceeds, in what follows, to explain and apply this principle of Christian liberty. ¶ *But all things are not expedient*. It is not proper to use this liberty at all times and under all circumstances; and when used, it should be used in a proper manner. In regard to meats which had been sacrificed to idols, for example, it was not proper to eat them, if it would be an offence or an occasion of stumbling to others; much less should one eat, if he really believe that such eating implies homage to the idol, ch. viii. 7–12; x. 28. Moreover, in eating meats, whether offered to idols or not, it is not expedient to eat such as are unwholesome, nor an inordinate quantity. See note or ver. 13. ¶ *I will not be brought under the power of any*. The verbal contrast, such as this apostle often employs, is better exhibited thus: "Though all things are in my power, they shall not bring me under their power." — *Conybear*. I will not indulge in any habit, so as to become a slave to it, whether it be the eating of particular kinds of meat, or aught else. The thing itself may be innocent; but slavery to it is inconsistent with true Christian liberty.

13. *Meats for the belly, &c.* Or, stomach. The implied argument which the apostle here answers, is this: — God has given an appetite for food, and provided food for the gratification of the appetite, and even made such food necessary for the sustenance of life: it is therefore lawful to partake of it. God has created us with sensual appetites, and provided means for their gratification; therefore it is lawful to gratify them. In reply, he does not deny the rule, but suggests circumspection in its application. The stomachs of children and men sometimes crave unwholesome food; it may be lawful to partake of it; but it is not expedient, inasmuch as disease and death would ensue. By long indulgence, the appetite craves an im-

the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord.

14 And God hath both raised

moderate quantity of food; it may be lawful to indulge it; but whoso allows himself thus to become the slave of his appetites, treasures up a sore retribution to himself. Moreover, by declaring the destruction of both stomach and food, that is, that they served only a temporary purpose, the apostle intimates the folly of an immortal being whose attention is chiefly devoted to such short-lived enjoyments, or who allows himself to become a slave to them. Hence, though it is lawful to indulge the natural appetite for food, it is inexpedient and hurtful to indulge it in an improper manner. So also in regard to the sensual appetites, it should be remembered, that, "although by implanting in us inclinations to sensual pleasures, God hath declared it to be his will that we should enjoy them, yet by connecting diseases and death with the immoderate use of these pleasures, he hath no less clearly declared, that he wills us to enjoy them only in moderation." — *Mac-knight*. Moreover, the apostle denies that the lawfulness of such gratification extends to promiscuous intercourse between the sexes. The body was made for higher purposes than thus to be defiled. God hath provided other means for the rational indulgence of sensual inclinations, and means as necessary to the continuance of the species as food is to the sustenance of life. Gen. i. 27, 28; Matt. xix. 4-6. While therefore such indulgence is lawful in the way of God's appointment, it is inexpedient and utterly unlawful in the way which he has forbidden, ch. vii. 3; Heb. xiii. 4. Such I regard as the scope of the argument in this verse, enforced in what follows by many important considerations. ¶ *God shall destroy, &c.* The stomach shall soon perish. It has an important use. But that use is temporary, and unworthy of our highest regards. It is not expedient that the soul should

up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the

be the slave of a perishable bodily organ. ¶ *The body is not, &c.* Its propensities are not to be thus gratified. Sufficient provision is made in another manner. ¶ *But for the Lord.* For obedience to his will; and "this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication." 1 Thess. iv. 3. The reference here, however, is to the Lord Jesus; but he testifies against corruption, and requires the same purity. ¶ *And the Lord for the body.* Various interpretations have been given of these words. The following seems quite as reasonable as any other: "The body is for the Lord Jesus, to be consecrated by his indwelling to his service; and the Lord Jesus is for the body, to consecrate it by dwelling therein in the person of his spirit." — *Conybeare*. The apostle recognized a union between Christ and mankind, which he sometimes represented as a bodily union, ver. 15; ch. xii. 27.

14. *And God hath both raised up, &c.* That is, from the dead. There can be no reasonable doubt, I think, that reference is here made to the resurrection, which is fully discussed in ch. xv. The argument implies, though it is not directly asserted, that some connection exists between the body that now is, and that which shall be. See note on Rom. viii. 23. This body is now for the Lord, ver. 13; and it is hereafter to be so changed "that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. iii. 21. Surely, then, the apostle urges, it ought not to be defiled by licentiousness, but preserved in all honor and purity.

15. *Know ye not, &c.* The argument here is, "that we as Christians are united to Christ; and that it is abominable to take the members of Christ and subject them to pollution and sin. Christ was pure, wholly pure. We are professedly united to him. We are bound therefore to be pure, as he

members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.

16 What! know ye not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

was. Shall that which is a part, as it were, of the pure and holy Saviour be prostituted to impure and unholy embraces?" — *Barnes*. ¶ *God forbid*. See note on Rom. iii. 4.

16. *He that is joined*. Strongly attached to. United by bonds of affection. The same word occurs in the next verse. ¶ *Is one body*. Closely connected; in sympathy with each other. ¶ *For two saith he, shall be one flesh*. See Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 5. What is said of the married, the apostle applies to illustrate the unholy connection of the licentious. Their characters, desires, and sympathies become alike. The contrast between this verse and the next exhibits the diametrical opposition between the character of a licentious man and that of a true Christian.

17. *But he that is joined unto the Lord*. Who has embraced him by faith, and imbibed a portion of his spirit; in other words, a true disciple of Christ. ¶ *Is one spirit*. United with him in spirit. Resembles him in spirit. See notes on John xv. 4; xvii. 11. Such become like Christ, in purity and true holiness.

18. *Flee fornication*. The apostle repeats his injunction against licentiousness, preparatory to another argument against it. ¶ *Every sin that a man doeth, &c.* This should be taken with some limitation. Most sins have their origin in the body, or in the fleshly nature. See note on Rom. vi. 6. In this sense, scarcely any sin can be regarded as exterior to the body. But the meaning here is evidently that sins generally do not affect the body, but the soul only. "Sins in general; the common sins which men commit do not immediately and directly affect the body, or waste its energies, and destroy life. Such is the case with falsehood, theft, malice,

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

dishonesty, pride, ambition, &c." — *Barnes*. There are other sins, also, which do affect the body; such as gluttony, drunkenness, and the like. The language of the apostle, therefore, is to be taken in a general sense. ¶ *Is without the body*. Does not produce an immediate effect on the body. ¶ *Sinneth against his own body*. Injures his own body. "He debilitates it, by introducing into it many painful and deadly diseases." — *Macknight*. "It wastes the bodily energies; produces feebleness, weakness, and disease; it impairs the strength, enervates the man, and shortens life." — *Barnes*. It is equally true, that it affects the brain, and through disease of that organ produces some of the most melancholy instances of insanity.

19. *Know ye not*. "This question is repeated six times in this one chapter, which may seem to carry with it a just reproach to the Corinthians, who had got a new and better instructor than himself, in whom they so much gloried, and may not unfitly be thought to set on his irony, ch. iv. 10, where he tells them they are wise." — *Locke*. If, as is generally believed, some one or more of the false teachers justified the licentious conduct here condemned, and perhaps practiced the same vice, it is not unnatural to suppose that Paul intended to rebuke the carelessness or insincerity of such teachers by so frequently appealing to the brethren whether they did not know what every intelligent Christian should understand. ¶ *That your body is the temple, &c.* See note on ch. iii. 16. "The body, not the soul or spirit, of man is represented as the temple of the Spirit, because the Spirit is spoken of, not as inhabiting, but as pervading and identifying itself with the soul or spirit. The body is the abode of the spirit of man; it is therefore the tem-

19 What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in

ple of the Spirit of God." — *Stanley*. "Primarily, indeed, the body is the dwelling, the temple of the soul; but the Holy Ghost, working in and on the soul, transforms it into his own nature, and thus dwells in the human body as in a temple." — *Olshausen*. This furnishes another argument against licentiousness, as thereby the temple in which the divine spirit dwells is defiled. ¶ *Which ye have of God*. "As this spirit is in us, and as it is given us by God, we ought not to dishonor the gift and the giver by pollution and vice." — *Barnes*. ¶ *And ye are not your own*. No man may properly say his body is his own, and therefore he has a right to abuse it as much as he pleases. To say nothing of our relative duties to each other, and of that mutual dependence on each other which causes individual honor or disgrace to become general, ch. xii. 26, the apostle here urges the argument that God has an ownership of the human body which man is bound to respect. We can at best regard ourselves only as tenants at will. God hath formed the body, and he sustains it from day to day. It is his property, not ours. If we defile or injure it, we do so at our peril. Some suppose the reference to be to the whole man, body and spirit, in which case the same reasons would exist why we have no such individual ownership as would absolve us from responsibility to God. But it is more probable that the body is specially intended. See note on ver. 20.

20. *For ye are bought with a price*. Upon this and such like expressions, a theory of atonement has been constructed, which, to say the least, does not well harmonize with the general testimony of the Scriptures concerning the character, purposes, and government of God. It has been sup-

posed that this language implies a purchaser, God; a thing purchased, an individual man, or the church collectively; a price paid, the blood of the blessed Saviour. The party who had the original ownership or claim, and to whom the price was paid, does not so clearly appear. For a brief discussion of this subject, see note on Rom. iii. 24. It may be sufficient here to observe, that, by creation, all men are the children and subjects of God. Christians are called his by purchase, because in communicating to them his character and purposes, that their hearts might be turned to him, his well beloved Son endured labor and even death. Since God has thus manifested his love by the death of his Son, John iii. 16, Rom. v. 8, those who have embraced the Son by faith, and enjoyed a present salvation from sin, 1 Tim. iv. 10, may well regard themselves as "bought with a price," and as under additional obligations to obedience. ¶ *Therefore glorify God in your body*. Preserve your body in purity. This is urged as the final argument against licentiousness. Dishonor not the body which in the highest sense belongs to God, and not to yourselves. ¶ *And in your spirit, &c.* These words are rejected as spurious by *Griesbach*, and many other critics. If they are spurious, the whole reference in ver. 19 is more distinctly to the body. If they are genuine, they teach what is abundantly taught elsewhere, that Christians should devote themselves entirely, with all their powers, to the service of God.

CHAPTER VII.

NOW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me:

CHAPTER VII.

In the foregoing chapters, the apostle discusses certain errors, both of doctrine and practice, in the Corinthian church, of which he had been informed

It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 Nevertheless, to avoid for-

by others. Ch. i. 11.; v. 1. He now proceeds to answer questions which had been propounded to him by the church, in a letter not now known to exist. The first question answered has relation to marriage, whether or not it was proper and advisable. Whether this question was the first in order, as proposed to him, or not, the answer has its proper place here, in connection with the kindred subject discussed in ch. v., vi. Indeed, one or both of those chapters have been regarded as introductory to this. It is worthy of consideration, whether the apostle did not thus unite the discussion of these two subjects for a special reason which I do not recollect to have seen noticed. It is known that Paul did not marry. In this chapter, he expresses the opinion that, under the then existing circumstances, it was advisable that Christians should not marry. His example and his general opinion on this subject were doubtless well known at Corinth. It is at least very possible that some of the false teachers and false or weak brethren drew conclusions from these facts, which were wholly unauthorized; and supposed or pretended that by discountenancing marriage he countenanced the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes. He intimates in ch. vi. 12, that they misapplied his doctrine of Christian liberty, in regard to this subject; and it is not unlikely that their misapplication reached the extent before indicated. As he was now about to express his opinion fully on the subject of marriage, in answer to their question, he may have thought it important to guard against any such misconstruction of his doctrine; and to assure them beforehand that their besetting sin was abhorrent to him, and inexcusable upon any principle which he either taught or accepted. Whether or not this was one principal design, such certainly would be the natural effect, of this juxtaposition of the two subjects.

1. Now concerning the things, &c.

nication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

With regard to the questions in your letter. One of these related to the fitness and expediency of marriage; and perhaps, for the reason before suggested, it was the first to which an answer was returned. ¶ *It is good.* It is expedient, under present circumstances. As a permanent institution, Paul by no means condemned marriage. On the contrary, he asserted its lawfulness, and rebuked those who prohibited it. Heb. xiii. 4; 1 Tim. iv. 1-3. But in seasons of violent opposition and persecution, when the advocates of Christianity had "no certain dwelling-place," ch. iv. 11, and were liable to the "spoiling of their goods," Heb. x. 34, he declared it expedient, as a general rule, to forbear marriage. ¶ *Not to touch a woman.* To have no matrimonial connection whatever. The difficulty of the Corinthians appears to have been twofold; (1.) whether the unmarried should marry; and (2.) whether those already married should continue to cohabit together. The first question is answered, in respect to the unmarried, in ver. 2, 8, 9; in respect to the duty of parents of such, in ver. 25-40. The second question is answered, in respect to married persons generally, in ver. 3-7; in respect to those whose husbands or wives were heathens, in ver. 10-24. The general answer is, under existing circumstances, it is expedient to refrain from marriage.

2. *Nevertheless.* A modification or exception to the general rule is here suggested. ¶ *To avoid fornication.* On account of licentiousness. "The word, being plural, is emphatical, and denotes all the different whoredoms mentioned, ch. vi. 9." — *Macknight.* ¶ *Let every man have his own wife, &c.* Let the institution of marriage remain and be honored. If men and women cannot live chastely in a single state, let them marry, notwithstanding all the inconveniences of marriage in these troublous times, rather than practice the vices to which the heathens, especially at Corinth, are addicted.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for

Barnes well observes that "the world is the witness of the evils which flow from the neglect of his advice. Every community where the marriage tie has been lax and feeble, or where it has been disregarded or dishonored, has been full of pollution and it ever will be."

3. *Let the husband, &c.* The apostle's meaning is sufficiently plain, though expressed in a manner free from the grossness to be found in heathen writers. It would seem that then, as well as in more recent times, there were those who considered it commendable for husbands and wives to live apart, as if in a state of celibacy. This practice the apostle condemns, and requires them rather to promote mutual purity. See note on ver. 5.

4. *The wife hath not power, &c.* By the marriage covenant, husbands and wives acquire a mutual property, so to speak, in each other. Neither is perfectly independent of the other, but each has claims which the other is bound to respect.

5. *Defraud ye not, &c.* Withhold not the matrimonial debt, except temporarily when engaged in extraordinary devotional services. And this separation is not to be permanent or long continued. ¶ *Lest Satan, &c.* The adversary. Evil of whatever kind, whether animate, or inanimate, adverse to holiness and happiness, is frequently personified as Satan. See note on Rom. xvi. 20. It here indicates the fleshly lusts and passions. The argument is, the permanent or prolonged separation of husbands and wives would expose them to licentious-

ness, in like manner as the unmarried were exposed. Ver. 2.

6 But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment.

7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift

ness, in like manner as the unmarried were exposed. Ver. 2.

6. *I speak this by permission, &c.* Commentators differ much in regard to this language. The more general opinion is, that Paul disclaims speaking by inspiration in this place:—as if he had said, I am permitted to give this as my opinion, but it is not to be taken as the utterance of the spirit, or the command of the Lord. But the application of the verse, thus interpreted, is various; some suppose it refers to all which precedes it in this chapter; some that it refers especially to ver. 5, or ver. 1, 2, or to ver. 1, alone; and some, as Maeknight and Rosenmuller, suppose it refers to what follows, ver. 7–9. Other commentators do not understand Paul to disclaim inspiration, but to say merely that his directions, thus far, concerning marriage and its proper duties, should be regarded as permissory and not mandatory; that he permits Christians to marry, even in that time of trouble, but does not command. The latter interpretation harmonizes well with the context, and is probably correct. See note on ver. 10.

7. *For I would that all men, &c.* I wish that all men had as much self-control as I have. It is known that Paul was not married; but it is not probable that he desired all men to remain single, and the race to become extinct. "Since it would, as Doddridge observes, be absurd to suppose the apostle wished marriage to cease, it must be limited to mean, 'have the same mastery over their appetites and passions as he had,' so as to be able to remain in virtuous celibacy while

of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

9 But if they cannot contain,

let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband.

it was by circumstances required."

—*Bloomfield*. ¶ *But every man hath his proper gift.* Or, peculiar gift; a gift which distinguishes him from others. "The gift of self-control, remarkable as an instance of the word being used for a moral and what we call a natural gift."—*Stanley*. In all other cases it denotes spiritual gifts. The meaning here is, God hath variously constituted men in this respect; to some he has given stronger passions, to some weaker; to some a greater and to some a less degree of self-control. The same rule will not apply to all. Those who are like me may better refrain from marriage, as they may do so without prejudice to their morals. But marriage is permitted and even recommended to those who have not the same gift. But in either case, all are equally commanded to avoid licentiousness, some in this way, some in that.

8. *I say therefore, &c.* In this verse and the next, agreeably to the principle announced in ver. 7, men are admonished to marry or not, as either should be indicated by the peculiarity of their gifts. ¶ *It is good for them, &c.* It is advisable, in the present time of persecution and distress, that they should refrain from marriage, like me, provided that also, like me, they are able to exercise self-control; for the cares of a family would increase their perplexities, and hinder them in their labors for the spread of the gospel.

9. *But if they cannot contain, &c.* If they have not this gift of self-control; if they cannot steadfastly and triumphantly resist temptation. ¶ *Let them marry.* It is permitted. It is lawful. ¶ *It is better, &c.* It is expedient to submit to all the inconveniences which now attend the married state, rather than be perpetually the victim of turbulent passions. Such would

not only be subject to a constant inward conflict, but would also be in danger of bringing scandal on the church and guilt on their own souls. Better than this would it be to encounter other inconveniences, which, however troublesome, might be sustained with a good conscience.

10. *And unto the married, &c.* Another class is here addressed, and another form of speech adopted. Heretofore, ver. 8, 9, the unmarried, who had assumed no special obligations, were *permitted* to marry or not, as should be most consistent with their several gifts. Here the married, who had already entered into a covenant, sanctioned by God in the beginning, and had assumed mutual obligations of an important and solemn character, are *commanded* to keep their covenant and to perform their obligations. ¶ *I command, yet not I, but the Lord.* Many commentators suppose the apostle here distinguishes between what he had already said upon his own responsibility and what he was about to say by divine authority. I prefer a different distinction, stated thus by *Lightfoot*:—"Weigh first that distinction, very usual in the schools, between a text of scripture and an opinion. Famine is worse than the sword. If you will, I will produce an opinion: famine afflicts a long while; the sword not. If you will, I will produce scripture: It is better for them that die by the sword, than that die by famine.—And now compare the words of the apostle: 'these things I say not, but the Lord'; that is, this is not my bare opinion, but so saith the scripture. And, on the contrary, 'These things I say, not the Lord' (ver. 12); that is, this is my opinion, although there be not some text of scripture which saith so, in plain words. Thus he explains himself ch. ix. 8. 'Say I these things

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and

and not the law?" To the same effect, it is said, "The Lord Jesus, during his ministry on earth, delivered many precepts of his law in the hearing of his disciples. And those which he did not deliver in person, he promised to reveal to them by the Spirit, after his departure. Therefore there is a just foundation for distinguishing the commandments which the Lord delivered in person from the commandments which he revealed to the apostles by the Spirit, and which they made known to the world in their sermons and writings. This distinction is not peculiar to Paul. It is insinuated likewise by Peter and Jude. See 2 Pet. iii. 2; Jude ver. 17." — *Macknight*. See note on ver. 12. ¶ *Let not the wife depart from her husband*. The special command to which the apostle refers was probably that which is found in Matt. v. 32, and xix. 3-9. The marriage covenant was not to be broken. The wife had taken on herself a solemn obligation, which she was bound to perform. A like obligation rested on the husband, ver. 11. The inconveniences attending the married state, at that period, furnished a sufficient reason to the unmarried for forbearing to enter it, but no excuse to the married for violating its obligations. Not even a difference in religious faith would justify a separation, ver. 12, 13, however strong an objection it might be against forming such a connection.

11. *But and if she depart*. The apostle recognizes the fact, that some had separated or might thus separate from their husbands, from conscientious scruples, or under the influence of some less worthy motive; inasmuch as such separations, under certain circumstances, were allowable under the Jewish law, and were very common among the Gentiles. He adds an injunction, showing that the law of Christ was more stringent on this subject than any which preceded it. ¶ *Let her remain unmarried*. Let her not marry a second husband, while

let not the husband put away *his* wife.

12 But to the rest speak I,

the first is living. She cannot dissolve the marriage contract, so as to be released from her obligations. She is guilty of adultery, if she contract such second marriage. Mark x. 12. ¶ *Or be reconciled to her husband*. This was the only alternative. If she would have a husband, she must have her own. If she would not have him, she must have none. Reconciliation should be earnestly sought, and obtained if possible, unless, for sufficient and justifiable reasons, an unmarried condition be adjudged more conducive to happiness and not prejudicial to morality. ¶ *And let not the husband put away his wife*. The same injunctions, in case of separation, are here implied. The obligations of husbands and wives are reciprocal. The Christian rule is as stringent upon the husband as upon the wife. Mark x. 11. The right which the Jews anciently had to put away their wives for trivial reasons was abrogated by Christ. He recognized one offence only as a justifiable cause for repudiation. Matt. v. 31, 32.

12. *But to the rest*. But in regard to the rest, or the remainder of the persons embraced in your inquiry, namely, those who are joined in marriage with heathens. The unmarried and the married Christians had already been instructed concerning their duty. But it would naturally happen, upon the introduction of the gospel into a heathen city, that a husband or wife would embrace Christianity, while the wedded partner remained devoted to heathenism. Of this class, and of the duty of Christians under such circumstances, the apostle now speaks. ¶ *Speak I, not the Lord*. Many suppose Paul here disclaims special inspiration, and represents himself as speaking upon his individual responsibility. I do not so understand him; and for the reasons stated in the note on ver. 10. It may be added, that "he now turns to the case of mixed marriages. This seems to imply that previously he had been speaking only

not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which

of marriages where both parties were Christians. On this subject he here declares that he had not, as in the other case, any actual precept of our Lord to refer to, and therefore took it upon himself to advise; whence we may observe, (1.) the confidence with which, in the absence of any such direct declaration of Christ, he puts forward his own judgment, as if conscious that he spoke with divine authority. (2.) The natural distinction between the sayings of Christ and the sayings of the apostles, as here exemplified; Christ laying down the general rule, and the apostles applying it to the particular emergencies which arose out of the relations of the particular churches with which they had to deal. (3.) The greater leniency of his decision than that delivered under the Old Dispensation by Ezra and Nehemiah." — *Stanley*. ¶ *If any brother.* Any Christian. ¶ *Hath a wife that believeth not.* Who is not yet converted to Christianity, but remains a heathen. ¶ *And she be pleased to dwell with him.* Is willing to continue the matrimonial connection. Some, perhaps, would be so bigoted and violent in opposition to the gospel, that they would not consent to live with Christian husbands. But others, of a more generous and forbearing disposition, would be willing to overlook this difference in religious faith, and to remain affectionate and faithful wives. Of such the apostle here speaks. ¶ *Let him not put her away.* It is not her fault that the husband has adopted a new religion. She has not changed; she remains such as she was when he chose her as his partner, and promised to be true to her until death. She has kept her vows, and faithfully performed her duties. He has no right to abandon her, or to be false to his obligations.

13. *And the woman, &c.* The same

hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife,

rule applies to the wife as to the husband. See ver. 12.

14. *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified, &c.* It would seem that an opinion prevailed in the church, that a Christian was polluted by matrimonial connection with a heathen. The scruple was not unnatural; but the apostle here shows it to have been unfounded. The general idea here conveyed by *ἡγιασται*, *sanctified*, as well as by *ἀκάθαρτά*, *unclean*, and *ἁγία*, *holy*, is sufficiently obvious; yet scarcely two commentators agree as to the precise idea. Among the various opinions expressed, this seems quite as probable as any other: — "It is a good rule of interpretation, that the words which are used in any place are to be limited in their signification by the connection; and all that we are required to understand here is, that the unbelieving husband was sanctified in regard to the subject under discussion; that is, in regard to the question whether it was proper for them to live together, or whether they should be separated or not. And the sense may be, — they are by the marriage tie one flesh. They are indissolubly united by the ordinance of God. As they are one by his appointment, as they have received his sanction to the marriage union, and as one of them is holy, so the other is to be regarded as sanctified, or made so holy by the divine sanction to the union, that it is proper for them to live together in the married relation; and, in proof of this, Paul says if it were not so, if the connection was to be regarded as impure and abominable, then their children were to be esteemed as illegitimate and unclean. But now they were not so regarded, and could not so be; and hence it followed that they might lawfully continue together." — *Barnes*. ¶ *Unclean.* This word "properly denotes that which is impure,

and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving

defiled, idolatrous, unclean, in a Levitical sense, Lev. v. 2, in a moral sense, Acts x. 28; 2 Cor. vi. 17; Eph. v. 5. The word will appropriately express the sense of illegitimate, and the argument, I think, evidently requires this. It may be summed up in a few words. Your separation would be a proclamation to all that you regard the marriage as invalid and improper. From this it would follow that the offspring of such a marriage would be illegitimate. But you are not prepared to admit this; you do not believe it. Your children you esteem to be legitimate, and they are so. The marriage tie, therefore, should be regarded as binding, and separation unnecessary and improper."—*Barnes*. ¶ *Holy*. Legitimate. Holy, in the same sense as they would otherwise be *unclean*. The whole verse then may be thus understood. By the ordinance of God, the unbelieving husband remains a proper and legitimate companion to the wife who has become a Christian; and in like manner the unbelieving wife, to the Christian husband; otherwise their children would be illegitimate, the offspring of an unlawful connection; but as the connection is legitimate and lawful, the children also are legitimate, and pure from taint. The connection being thus legitimate and sanctioned by God, there is no occasion to dissolve it.

15. *But if the unbelieving depart*. The believing partner was not at liberty, under the gospel, to dissolve the matrimonial connection. But the unbelieving partner, not acknowledging the gospel rule, and perhaps being bitterly opposed to the gospel, might choose a separation. ¶ *Let him depart*. In such case a separation could not well be prevented. The unbeliever was not subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and the heathen laws permitted the separation. The believer must submit, as quietly and patiently

depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

as possible, as to an unavoidable bereavement. ¶ *A brother or sister is not under bondage*, &c. "In such a case the apostle declares that the Christian party shall consent to a separation from the heathen; that the Christian party, brother or sister, is in such a case not bound. But God has called believers to peace; it is, therefore, the duty of the believing party to maintain peace as long as possible, and to bear with the heathen party; nor can he indeed know but that perhaps this very gentleness may win over the unbelieving party, and bring him or her to salvation. Viewed in this light, the passage appears to be quite simple, and yet it has presented very grave difficulties to interpreters.—The indefinite 'is not under bondage' was understood to mean that the permission is herein conveyed for the Christian party not only to dismiss the heathen party, who wishes to separate, but also to marry another. But this is evidently not conveyed in the words. Ver. 15 forms primarily only a contrast to ver. 12; the heathen party who wishes to remain, says Paul, shall not be dismissed; but he who desires to go, he adds in ver. 15, shall not be detained. That at the same time the permission to marry again was granted by the apostle is the less probable, since in ver. 16 the possibility of the conversion of the heathen party is dwelt upon.—It cannot, from this very possibility, be the apostle's meaning, that the Christian party is at liberty to marry again, when the heathen has left him or her; the re-marrying of the Christian party would always be, according to Matt. v. 32, adultery; the Christian is only relieved from the obligation of living with a heathen party, and this alone is intended to be enforced by the words."—*Olshausen*. It should be added that if the heathen party, as was probable in that age of licentiousness, should again

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife.

17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

marry or otherwise commit adultery, the Christian party would thereby become absolved from the marriage tie, and agreeably to the rule of Christ might lawfully be divorced, and might contract another marriage. ¶ *But God hath called us unto peace.* The unbeliever should not be tempted to separate by the fastidious scruples or overbearing spirit of the Christian. Every effort should be made by forbearance, patience, tolerance, by a constant exhibition of affection and Christian kindness, by all means indeed not involving a sacrifice of moral integrity, to preserve domestic peace, to make home pleasant, and to avoid separation.

16. *For what knowest thou, &c.* A reason is here assigned, aside from a strict sense of duty to obey the law of Christ, why the Christian should endeavor to live in peace with the unbelieving partner, as well as to leave an opportunity for reconciliation when a separation had taken place. There was at least a possibility that such an exhibition of the Christian graces might impress the unbeliever's heart, and result in conversion to Christianity. The hope of such a blessed result should not be abandoned as long as the possibility remained. Such efforts for peace have often been blessed in the manner here indicated. *Chrysostom* remarks that "no teacher has such an effect in conversion as a wife." The gospel is commended to the heart of an unbeliever more effectually by an exhibition of its purifying and sanctifying power, than in any other manner whatever. It is not here declared, nor is it true, that such efforts would be uniformly successful. No human exertions can accomplish the work to which divine grace alone is adequate. Yet God sometimes, nay often, blesses human exertions as the means of communicating rich gifts; and hence the Christian is encouraged

to persevere in well-doing. ¶ *Save thy husband.* Convert him to Christianity.

17. *But as God hath distributed to every man.* As God hath allotted to all men their several gifts, endowments, or whatever is peculiar to themselves. From what follows, the special reference here is manifestly to the various conditions in life, in which men are placed. See note on Rom. ix. 21. ¶ *As the Lord hath called.* That is, in whatever condition each may be, when called to be a Christian, or when he is converted. ¶ *So let him walk.* Let him not seek by violence to change his condition, but rather in that condition illustrate the power of faith and the graces of Christianity. This is the general principle which underlies the foregoing argument, and it is illustrated by several examples in ver. 17-24. ¶ *And so ordain I in all churches.* The rule was not local but general. It was binding on all Christians. Very probably in the apostolic time, as more recently, an idea prevailed that Christianity dissolved all the existing relations and obligations of men. Against this idea, productive of confusion and violence, the apostle earnestly protested. In whatever condition of life men were placed, they were to exemplify the power of Christianity in that condition, whether married or unmarried, circumcised or uncircumcised, bond or free. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the reference is exclusively to the outward condition of men, not to their moral or spiritual state. A change of moral condition was the prime object of Christianity; and the rapidity of that change was in proportion to the influence of the gospel upon the heart. Paul never taught men to continue to walk in ungodliness because they were ungodly when called; but he earnestly exhorted all Christians to renounce ungodliness and worldly lusts, and thenceforth to live

18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any man called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.

19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing,

soberly, righteously, and godly. Tit. ii. 12.

18. *Is any one called.* Converted to Christianity. ¶ *Being circumcised.* Being a Jew, or a proselyte, and having received the distinguishing badge of the Jewish religion. ¶ *Let him not become uncircumcised.* Let him not repudiate that badge, or seek to obliterate it. ¶ *Is any one called in uncircumcision.* Is a Gentile converted; one who has not been circumcised. ¶ *Let him not be circumcised.* The Jewish rule was that all proselytes from the Gentiles should be circumcised. The Christian rule required no such conformity to Jewish rites. The apostle had frequent occasion to insist on this, in opposition to the Judaizing faction in the church, who urged circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic law as the duty of Christians. See note on Acts xv. 1.

19. *Circumcision is nothing, &c.* It is not of the slightest consequence whether a man is circumcised or not. Christianity has no reference to that distinction. See note on Rom. ii. 27-29. Let no man therefore seek to change his condition in that respect. It was right for the Jew before conversion to be circumcised, and for the Gentile to be uncircumcised. It is right for both to remain as they are, since they are converted. ¶ *But the keeping of the commandments of God.* This is the great requisition of the gospel, and the only important duty. Obedience to the commandments of God of course implies faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God.

20. *Let every man abide.* Or, continue. ¶ *In the same calling wherein he was called.* In the same rank or condition in life. The general rule here announced is, that the established relations of life are not to be disturbed by the prevalence of Christianity.

but the keeping of the commandments of God.

20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

21 Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it: but

Each should continue to labor in his customary employment. But this general rule is to be understood with limitations. At the call of our Lord, the fishermen of Galilee forsook their nets, that they might become fishers of men. Matt. iv. 19, 20. And though they occasionally afterwards pursued their accustomed labor, John xxi. 3, yet as an employment it was abandoned, that they might devote themselves to a higher work. So Paul, although he continued to provide for his own wants by laboring as a tent-maker, Acts xviii. 3; xx. 34, yet in connection with this assumed a far more important labor, being not behind the chiefest of the apostles. 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11. There is yet another limitation of this general rule, so obvious that it needs only to be stated. If a man is converted while engaged in an unlawful or immoral employment, he should not continue therein, but forthwith abandon it, even at pecuniary loss. See note on Acts xix. 19. If his condition in life is such that his own convenience or profit involves the injury and unhappiness of his fellow-men, he should change that condition, both for his own sake and theirs. See note on ver. 21. In this way only can he "keep the commandments of God," ver. 19. For another limitation, see note on ver. 21.

21. *Art thou called, being a servant.* Slavery existed in Greece when this Epistle was written, and doubtless some slaves at Corinth, as well as elsewhere, had been converted, and were members of the church. They might naturally suppose that their bondage was inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel; that it was cruel and unjust. To this class the apostle here addresses himself, evidently with the design to produce quietness among them, and to

if thou mayest be made free, use *it* rather.

prevent the scandal which insurrection would attach to the gospel, as a disorganizing system. ¶ *Care not for it.* This "is an idiomatical expression, signifying, let not this be a trouble to you; be not solicitous about this, as though it could affect your acceptance with God; for grace knows no distinctions of bond or free."—*Bloomfield.* Paul does not require of them an impossibility, namely, that they should be utterly insensible of their oppression and affliction; nor does he require them to banish the desire of freedom, but rather encourages it; he comforts them with the assurance that before God they are equal to their masters, all being both servants of Christ and the Lord's freemen, ver. 22. In this view of the case, he exhorts them to bear their burdens patiently, to cherish a Christian spirit, and to be faithful to the several duties of their condition in life. "This duty is often enjoined on those who were servants or slaves. Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22; 1 Tim. vi. 1; Tit. ii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 18. This duty of the slave, however, does not make the oppression of the master right or just, any more than the duty of one who is persecuted or reviled to be patient and meek makes the conduct of the persecutor and reviler just or right; nor does it prove that the master has a right to hold the slave as property, which can never be right in the sight of God; but it requires simply that the slave should evince, even in the midst of degradation and injury, the spirit of a Christian, just as it is required of a man, who is injured in any way, to bear it as becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus. Nor does this passage prove that a slave ought not to desire freedom if it can be obtained, for this is supposed in the subsequent clause. Every human being has a right to desire to be free, and to seek liberty. But it should be done in accordance with the rules of the gospel, so as not to dishonor the religion of Christ, and so as not to injure the true happiness of others, or over-

22 For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is

turn the foundations of society."—*Barnes.* ¶ *But if thou mayest be made free.* Literally, if thou art able to be made free, or to become free. The meaning seems to be, if thou hast freedom offered to thee, or if thou canst obtain it lawfully. The apostle does not recommend insurrection or forcible opposition; but he intimates that legal deliverance from bondage might be expected through the influence of the gospel. And the event has verified the prophetic intimation. In nearly all Christendom, men have become convinced of the injustice of holding their fellow-men in bondage, and by legal enactments have given freedom to the slave. And even where slavery yet exists, as an institution recognized by law, many have become so fully convinced of its inconsistency with the spirit of the gospel, that they have emancipated their bondmen, and rendered them justice, at least in part, by furnishing a temporary provision for their wants. It is devoutly to be wished and may be reasonably expected, that when grace has performed its perfect work on all hearts, the iniquitous system of human bondage will have a final end, and the song of jubilee will go up to heaven from free and glad hearts. ¶ *Use it rather.* Accept liberty rather than bondage. In its best state, in its mildest form, in its most kind administration, slavery is an evil from which its subjects should gladly accept deliverance. And the apostle advises those who are in bondage to take freedom whenever they have lawful opportunity.

22. *He that is called in the Lord, being a servant.* Being in bondage when he is converted. ¶ *Is the Lord's freeman.* "Is Christ's freedman."—*Conybeare.* He has been made free from bondage to sin, far more terrible than civil bondage. He is, in this regard, as free as his earthly master; more so, indeed, unless the master also be converted. He has Christian liberty; and a sense of this will console him, even though he remains in bondage to man. ¶ *Is Christ's servant.* Or, slave.

the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called *being* free, is Christ's servant.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

Even the converted freeman, though as master he holds others in bondage, is subject to Christ, a master whom he is bound to obey. If he be not a Christian, he is in bondage to sin. In either case, his superiority to his slave is much less than many imagine. Or, rather, if both master and slave be converted, in respect to Christ they stand on a level. Both are made free from sin, and both are bound to obey Christ. If the master remain in unbelief, he is morally and spiritually far inferior to his converted slave. The slave therefore may be less solicitous to change his condition and may more patiently submit to its inconveniences, when he considers that Christ regards him as the equal of his master, and in the future life will utterly abolish the temporary distinction.

23. *Ye are bought with a price.* See note on ch. vi. 20. ¶ *Be not ye the servants of men.* This is sometimes interpreted to mean, — Do not regard yourselves as slaves to men, nor your service as rendered to earthly masters; but, as Christ's freemen, consider obedience to your masters merely as the performance of your duty to Christ, the common Master of both bond and free. Others suppose reference is made to the purchase of a slave's freedom by his friends; and they understand the exhortation to be, — Having been made free, at a price contributed by brethren, do not voluntarily return to slavery. But "the best commentators are agreed that this is to be taken figuratively, in the sense 'do not be blindly followers of men, conforming to their opinions,' &c. The apostle is, with reason, thought to allude to the false teachers above adverted to; meaning to caution the Corinthians against taking an unnecessary yoke, by subjecting their consciences to such dogmatical directors." — *Bloomfield.* It

24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

25 Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment,

may also embrace this idea: — you have been bought with a price and have thus been made the Lord's freemen, ver. 22. Be not therefore in bondage to human opinions; disregard all distinctions of bond and free, made by false teachers or by proud brethren, as if one condition was more honorable in the sight of God than the other: remember that outward condition is not the test of excellence at the divine tribunal; it is true that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart," 1 Sam. xvi. 7; see also John vii. 24. Such considerations might enable the slave to abide more quietly in bondage, agreeably to the exhortation in ver. 24.

24. *Let every man abide, &c.* This is substantially a repetition of the exhortation or rule in ver. 17, and it applies equally to the several examples in ver. 18–23, and to the case of the married and unmarried, previously mentioned, to which the apostle returns in ver. 25. The intervening verses may be regarded as in some sort parenthetical, designed to illustrate the general rule. ¶ *With God.* "Conformably to the will of God." — *Bloomfield.*

25. *Now concerning virgins.* The apostle here returns to the direct consideration of the main subject under discussion. "By virgins it is plain he here means those of both sexes, who are in a celibate state. It is probable he had formerly dissuaded them from marriage in the present state of the church. This, it seems, they were uneasy under, ver. 28, 35, and therefore sent some questions to St. Paul about it, and particularly, what, then, should men do with their daughters? Upon which occasion, ver. 25–37, he gave directions to the unmarried, about their marrying or not marrying; and in the close, ver. 38, answers to the parents, about marrying their daugh-

as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

26 I suppose therefore, that this is good for the present dis-

ters; and then, ver. 39, 40, he speaks of widows."—*Locke*. ¶ *I have no commandment of the Lord*. This is not to be understood as a disclaimer of inspiration; but only that Jesus Christ had given no distinct command upon this subject. See notes on ver. 10, 12. "The best commentators, ancient and modern, are in general agreed that the sense is,—I have no special command of Christ, issued by him while on earth, to urge. This deficiency, then, the apostle proceeds himself to supply."—*Bloomfield*. ¶ *I give my judgment*. My opinion or direction. ¶ *As one that hath obtained*, &c. Not merely as a Christian, but as an apostle. See 1 Tim. i. 12, and note on Rom. i. 5. Although Jesus left no specific direction applicable to this case, yet Paul proposed, under the guidance of the spirit, to determine the question agreeably to the general principles of the gospel.

26. *I suppose therefore*. This is my judgment, ver. 25. ¶ *That this is good for the present distress*. "By reason of the trials which are near at hand."—*Conybeare*. The word rendered *distress* is generally translated *necessity*, conveying the idea of something difficult or impossible to be avoided. The apostle is generally understood to refer here to the violent opposition encountered at that period by the advocates of the gospel, and to the persecution which soon afterwards became even more intense. What he says, therefore, like his language in ver. 7, 8, is to be understood, not as a general rule concerning marriage, but as a rule specially adapted to the existing state of things. Our Lord himself thus adapted his directions to the circumstances in which his disciples were placed; changing them with a change of circumstances. See note on Luke xxii. 36. ¶ *It is good for a man so to be*. Many understand this to mean, it is good for a man to remain as he is; that is, unmarried; for of

distress, *I say*, that it is good for a man so to be.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed.

this class he is speaking. The subsequent verse, however, indicates a different interpretation. The word *so* is the emphatic word; and the meaning seems to be, it is good for a man to be thus, or to be governed by this rule; which follows in the next verse. This is the course of conduct which I advise, would express the idea.

27. *Art thou bound unto a wife?* I apprehend the apostle does not mean, Art thou already married? as some interpret his words. He had already given his directions to this class, ver. 10, 11; and there is no apparent necessity for repeating them here. Besides, he is here professedly addressing the unmarried. But how can the unmarried be properly described as "bound unto a wife"? By betrothal, or by solemn promise to marry. This was common among the Jews, and has been common in Christendom. Such a promise or betrothal is of binding force, certainly, unless it is withdrawn by mutual agreement. ¶ *Seek not to be loosed*. Be true to your engagements. Perform your promise. Seek not to become free from your obligations. A wilful failure to fulfil a promise of marriage is near akin to the repudiation of a lawful wife, which no offence except one can justify. Matt. v. 32. Better might a Christian encounter the perils then imminent from persecution, than be thus recreant to his plighted faith. If the common interpretation be adopted, the meaning will be like ver. 10, 11. ¶ *Art thou loosed from a wife?* Generally interpreted to mean, Art thou free from a wife? in other words, Art thou unmarried? In conformity with the idea before expressed, I understand the apostle to mean not simply those who had no wives, but those who were under no moral obligation to marry, in fulfilment of pledges already given. Art thou free and unpledged? Art thou not betrothed to any woman, or under promise to make her thy wife?

Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall

¶ *Seek not a wife.* If you are free, remain so; it will be your most prudent course in this time of trial and distress.

28. *Thou hast not sinned.* You violate no divine law. Marriage, as an institution, is honorable, and is by divine appointment; there is no law which prohibits it. Hence it cannot be sinful in itself. Nevertheless, there are circumstances which render it inexpedient. There are many circumstances, not mentioned by the apostle, which indicate the expediency of refraining from marriage. The one which he does name was at that time urgent. In view of it, he advised those who were free to remain so; yet, if they preferred to encounter the inconveniences which he indicated, they violated no law, and did not commit sin. ¶ *And if a virgin marry, &c.* The same rule applied to males and females. *Virgins*, in ver. 25, is understood to include both; here it seems to be applied to the female only. The male is addressed in ver. 27. A similar separate address occurs in ver. 10, 11. ¶ *Nevertheless.* Although you sin not, although you contract no moral guilt by marrying. ¶ *Such.* Those who do marry at the present time of distress. ¶ *Shall have trouble in the flesh.* Shall be exposed to many perils, and subject to great anxiety and suffering. "Days of persecution are coming on, and you may be led to the stake, and, in those fiery trials, your families may be torn from you, and a part be put to death. Or you may be poor, and oppressed, and driven from your homes, and made wanderers and exiles, for the sake of your religion." — *Barnes*. Personal suffering is sufficiently hard to be endured; but it is aggravated by the fact that others who are dear to us are involved in it. ¶ *But I spare you.* Some understand the apostle to mean, I have given this advice

have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

because I would spare you, or prevent you from suffering. Others, and as I think more correctly, understand him to mean, I forbear to enumerate the troubles in the flesh to which marriage will expose you. I will spare you the melancholy recapitulation. If you choose to marry, you have the lawful right, and I will not unnecessarily distress you. It is sufficient that I have given you timely warning of your danger.

29. *But this I say, brethren.* Whatever your outward condition may be, whether bond or free, whether married or unmarried, the present state of things is temporary, and not worth your most intense regard. ¶ *The time is short.* It is drawn into a narrow space, as the original word implies. The time of every man's life is short, and what is here said is important in that view. But the apostle manifestly has special reference to the time of distress then rapidly approaching. Similar forms of expression frequently occur. Matt. xxiv. 33; Rom. xiii. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 7. ¶ *It remaineth.* The critics are by no means agreed as to the proper grammatical construction of this place. The general idea, however, is sufficiently obvious. This remains; this is the consequence of the fact announced; this is the lesson taught by it. ¶ *Both they that have wives, &c.* This is to be understood in a general sense, teaching the impropriety of undue attachment to temporary possessions or enjoyments. Christianity does not teach us to slight or undervalue the blessings of God, nor is persecution or tribulation designed to produce that effect. But both Christianity and the various dispensations of Providence, whether for the present joyous or grievous, should persuade us that we ought not to value the gifts more highly than the Giver, nor worship the creature rather than

30 And they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that

the Creator. All earthly blessings should be held subject to the divine pleasure, with a disposition to make proper use of them while they remain, and to surrender them without murmuring whenever they shall be taken away. The marriage connection, always precarious, was peculiarly liable to be sundered in the time of trial then approaching. The married should live in preparation for that event, and the unmarried should consider that the joy they sought in marriage gave slight promise of permanency. This might abate their desire to marry.

30. *And they that weep, &c.* Present afflictions, though grievous, are temporary in duration. As a general truth, they "are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii. 18. As a special truth, the apostle would say that those who suffered inconvenience, either through connection with unbelieving or uncongenial wives, or through a desire to marry, or on account of bondage, or for any other reason, should consider that a great change of circumstances was at hand, and a time of trial approaching, which would overshadow all present griefs, or terminate them by an unexpected deliverance. ¶ *And they that rejoice, &c.* Considering the fleeting nature of all human enjoyments, and especially at a time when great convulsions in society were imminent, men should not indulge in immoderate joy, nor give way to excessive rejoicing, as if to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. Isa. lvi. 12. They should rather cherish a spirit of calm contentment and thankfulness, mingled with a consciousness that perpetual sunshine is not to be expected. The general idea is, that the affections should not be placed exclusively on those earthly possessions, or relations, or conveniences, which occasion present rejoicing. ¶ *And they that buy, &c.* An accumulation of worldly goods,

buy, as though they possessed not;

31 And they that use this world as not abusing it; for

however it may minister to present convenience and comfort,—perhaps also to pride and enervating luxury,—is not to be regarded as a permanent good. All must be surrendered at death. And the apostle intimated that in the troublous time approaching, earthly possessions might be swept away by violence. Those who bought, therefore, did not secure any permanent advantage over those who possessed not.

31. *And they that use this world, &c.* A moderate use of God's blessings is conducive to happiness; but the immoderate use or the abuse of the same blessings tends to sorrow and destruction. In expectation of that time of trial which was shortly to come, men should not indulge in excess, but should calmly look forward to the future, and be prepared to meet any change with fortitude and with a sound mind. ¶ *For the fashion of this world passeth away.* The present condition of affairs is not permanent. A change is near at hand, ver. 29. The apostle is supposed to draw his imagery from the shifting of scenes at the theatre, to which the Greeks were accustomed to resort. He manifestly refers to a time of "distress" which was very near, and which he continually refers to in this chapter, as a reason why peculiar duties and sacrifices are commanded. This paraphrase of ver. 29-31, is worthy of attention:—"But by the way let me tell you that within a short time now, it will come to pass, that they that have wives shall be as they that have none, all in great and equal dangers. And they that weep for the loss of husband or wife, as those that have lost neither, and those that rejoice for being newly married, as those that are not married at all; and rich men and purchasers, as those that keep nothing at all for themselves; those that deal in the world, as those that are wholly taken off from it; for as a scene that is turned and shows a new face, so doth now the fashion of

the fashion of this world passeth away.

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.

the world begin to appear, the times are turning into very troublesome." — *Hammond*.

32. *Without carefulness.* Without anxiety. The apostle by no means discountenances that prudent carefulness which guards against danger, and which is so important in all the affairs of life. Heedlessness is very different from an abiding trust in God. But he desired that his brethren might be exempt from such solicitous care for the future as would interfere with the discharge of their Christian duties; such, in fact, as was inconsistent with a firm confidence in divine protection. The same kind of carefulness, or anxiety, is mentioned by our Lord in Matt. vi. 31. This verse connects directly with ver. 28, the intervening verses being thrown in, after Paul's manner, to exhibit a kindred aspect of the subject under discussion. He now tells his brethren that, although they may marry without sin, ver. 28, yet he has advised them not to marry, because he desired to preserve them from additional anxiety and perplexity; and in what follows, he illustrates his meaning by examples. ¶ *Careth for the things that belong to the Lord.* Is chiefly solicitous to perform his religious duties, whether in preaching the word or in exemplifying the spirit of the gospel in his conduct. The man who has no family may devote himself more entirely to this work, in a troublesome time, inasmuch as his attention is not distracted by the cares of the world, or anxiety concerning the temporal welfare of his wife and children.

33. *Careth for the things that are of*

34 There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband.

35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast

the world. Is solicitous in regard to earthly affairs. ¶ *How he may please his wife.* How he may gratify her. This may be understood of the desire to make suitable provision for her support, safety, and comfort, and the consequent diversion of his attention from duties strictly religious; or it may be understood as an intimation that the wife, if not an unbeliever, might at least have less devotion to the service of the Lord, and, through his anxiety to please her, might exert an unhappy influence upon him; she might, perhaps, induce him to conform to the Jewish traditions, or to Gentile rites and ceremonies, in a manner inconsistent with the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free, and equally inconsistent with a firm adherence to the principles of the gospel.

34. *Between a wife and a virgin.* Between a married and an unmarried woman the distinction is the same as between a married and an unmarried man. See note on ver. 33. What is here said, in ver. 32-34, is to be understood as having special reference to circumstances then existing or near at hand; but not as referring to marriage in itself, considered, or as it may exist, in quiet and peaceable times. Otherwise the apostle would seem to contradict himself. 1 Tim. iv. 3; Tit. i. 6, 7; Heb. xiii. 4. The sense of the whole passage, in reference to the state of things then existing, may be expressed thus: "I wish that you should have no worldly anxiety. The unmarried man has indeed anxiety, but it is for the cause of Christ; but the married man has the additional anxiety about worldly matters, and the

a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass

gratification of his wife, and is thus divided between the interests of Christ and of the world. In like manner with regard to women, both the married wife and the unmarried woman have an anxiety to please Christ and be ready for his coming; but the married woman has besides the additional anxiety to please her husband." — *Stanley*.

35. *And this I speak for your profit.* For your benefit; that you may be better able to perceive what course in life will most directly tend to your growth in grace and your perfection in obedience. ¶ *Not that I may cast a snare upon you.* The figure is supposed to be taken from the method of capturing wild beasts with a *lasso*, a rope or leathern thong with a running noose. The meaning is, that he would not bind his brethren to celibacy by an absolute command; but as he had already said that marriage did not involve sin, ver. 28, so he repeats that he does not forbid it, but only exhibits its present inconveniences and disadvantages. ¶ *But for that which is comely.* What is most fit and proper, under present circumstances. ¶ *Without distraction.* He had shown in ver. 32–34, how the mind of the married was liable to be distracted.

36. *Behaveth himself uncomely.* Imposes improper, unnecessary, or uncomely restraints, as the following words imply. ¶ *Toward his virgin.* Towards his unmarried daughter, or other females under his charge. ¶ *If she pass the flower of her age.* If she has already attained and passed a marriageable age. ¶ *And need so require.* If she be desirous to marry. Among the Jews marriage was required and celibacy decreed disgraceful. Isa. iv. 1. And among the heathen also it was considered creditable to remain unmarried. If, for

the flower of *her* age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

37 Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power

this or any other reason, marriage was deemed advisable, it was permitted. ¶ *Let him do what he will, &c.* In the Eastern nations, the father had full power over the daughter in respect to marriage. "The whole tone of this passage is determined by the assumption, natural in Greek and Jewish society, that the daughter, while yet in her father's house, had no will of her own in the matter; he was entirely responsible for her, and hence the application to him of some expressions, as in ver. 37, which seem properly only applicable to her." — *Stanley*. ¶ *He sinneth not; let them marry.* Although marriage be unadvisable in such a season of distress, yet in the case supposed a father might lawfully permit the marriage of his daughter.

37. *Nevertheless.* The apostle proceeds to suggest other circumstances which require a different decision. ¶ *He that standeth steadfast in his heart.* He who firmly adheres to his purpose to retain his daughter in his own house, as the most safe and proper place for her. ¶ *Having no necessity.* Where nothing in her disposition or desires render a different course necessary, and where no outward circumstance exercises a controlling power. ¶ *But hath power over his own will.* Is not bound by any previous promise or obligation. A custom anciently existed in the East, and still exists in many countries, of betrothing children of a tender age, even in infancy; and such betrothal was regarded as binding both on children and on parents. In such case, the father would not have full "power over his own will," but would be bound by his contract, even though he might afterwards think the marriage undesirable. ¶ *Hath so decreed in his heart.* Hath firmly and deliber-

over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

38 So then he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married

ately determined. ¶ *That he will keep his virgin.* That he will preserve her unmarried. ¶ *Doeth well.* It is lawful to do so, and also expedient, under the present circumstances.

38. *Doeth well.* He violates no law; he commits no sin. It is right and proper. See ver. 28. ¶ *Doeth better.* Does that which is to be preferred, if there be no obstacle; for although marriage is lawful, celibacy is equally lawful, and less liable to care and anxiety amidst persecutions. See ver. 32-34.

39. *The wife is bound by the law, &c.* See note on Rom. vii. 2. ¶ *She is at liberty, &c.* The case of widows has not yet been discussed. They have the same right to marry which belongs to other unmarried females. ¶ *Only in the Lord.* Only to a Christian. It was not permitted then, and it is unwise always, that Christians should become matrimonially connected with unbelievers.

40. *She is happier if she so abide.* If she continue unmarried. The reasons are assigned in ver. 34. ¶ *After my judgment.* See note on ver. 25. ¶ *And I think also that I have the spirit of God.* In these words, the apostle claims to speak by inspiration, so that his opinion is equal to his assertion. See notes on ver. 10, 12. He is supposed to adopt this form of speech, with reference to the false teachers at Corinth, some of whom seem to have given different instructions for which they claimed the authority of inspiration. Hence the phrase may be understood to imply, — Whatever others may teach, and whatever authority they may claim, I do not acknowl-

to whom she will; only in the Lord.

40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOW as touching things offered unto idols, we know

edge myself inferior to them; for I think that I, no less than others, have the spirit of God, and am competent to instruct with apostolical authority.

CHAPTER VIII.

In this chapter, the apostle commences an answer to another question proposed in the letter from Corinth, ch. vii. 1, concerning things offered to idols. This discussion extends, interrupted by some digressions, through this and the two following chapters. "When the heathens offered sacrifices of such animals as were fit for food, a part of the carcass was burned on the altar, a part was given to the priest, and on the remainder the offerers feasted with their friends, either in the idol's temple or at home. Sometimes also a part was sent as a present to such as they wished to oblige; and if the sacrifice was large, a part of it was sold in the public market. To these idolatrous feasts the heathens often invited the Christians of their acquaintance in Corinth; and some of the brethren there, desirous of preserving the friendship of their neighbors, accepted these invitations; perhaps at the persuasion of the false teacher, who called it an innocent method of avoiding persecution. They knew an idol was nothing in the world; and therefore their partaking of the sacrifices, even in the idol's temple, could not be reckoned a worshipping of the idol. Besides, such a feast was considered by enlightened Christians as a common meal, which, under the gospel, they were at liberty to eat, especially if they did it to show their

that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

belief that idols have no existence as gods. These arguments, it is true, are not explicitly stated by the apostle; but the things he hath written in this and in ch. x., being direct confutations of them, we may believe they were mentioned by the Corinthian brethren in their letter referred to, ch. vii. 1." —*Macknight*. It should be added, that in the matter of partaking of meats sacrificed to idols, the Gentile portion of the church was especially exposed to danger, and to them is the apostle's instruction particularly addressed. The infirmity of the Jewish portion of the church lay in a different direction. They supposed the Mosaic ritual, as to clean and unclean, was still obligatory; and some of them were so squeamish that, through fear of being defiled by eating unclean meats unawares, they abstained entirely, and ate only vegetables. See note on Rom. xiv. 2. How to reconcile the differences between these two classes, to rectify the errors of the one without at the same time confirming the errors of the other, was a task of no small difficulty; and in no church, so far as we can gather information from the Acts or Epistles of the Apostles, was this difficulty more apparent than in the church at Corinth. Jews, with their prejudices, were to be found in all the churches; but no where else does the participation in idolatrous feasts seem to have been so general among the Gentile Christians as at Corinth. This difficulty is fairly met and surmounted in this and the following chapters.

1. *Now, as touching things offered unto idols.* In regard to things which have been sacrificed to idols. This is Paul's general statement of the subject to be discussed. ¶ *We know that we all have knowledge.* It would seem that the Gentile members of the church justified the eating of meats sacrificed to idols, on the ground that they knew perfectly well that an idol was nothing real, ver. 4; and therefore their eating could not be construed into an act of idolatrous worship. It is probable

2 And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

that this fact was mentioned in the letter to Paul. In his answer, he admits the fact, in regard to their knowledge, but by certain limitations, and by the statement of other facts equally true, he shows that the conclusion drawn by them was not entirely justifiable. It is true, says he, that we all have this knowledge concerning the vanity of idols. But there are other things to be considered. ¶ *Knowledge puffeth up.* The first qualifying circumstance presented by the apostle is, that knowledge alone does not constitute perfect Christianity. Knowledge alone will not make a man meek and humble, nor induce him to obey God by doing good to his fellow-men. On the contrary, it puffeth up and maketh proud. It causes men to look with contempt on their more ignorant brethren. Something more than knowledge is necessary to unite men as brethren, and as the sons of one Father. ¶ *But charity edifieth.* Charity, or love, as the word should be translated, buildeth up, or tends to make men perfect Christians. Knowledge and love combined will more surely indicate the path of duty than knowledge alone. This principle is applied in ver. 9-15, and in ch. x. 28-30. The idea embraced in this verse is fully elaborated in ch. xiii.

2. *And if any man think, &c.* Paul had intimated in ver. 1, that knowledge alone had a tendency to make men proud and self-conceited; it "puffeth up;" and he now says that when they are in this condition, they are ignorant of the true purpose of knowledge. "He hath not known what is most necessary to be known on the subject; neither hath he known the purpose for which this knowledge is to be desired, nor the use which he ought to make of it; namely, that thereby he ought to edify others." —*Macknight*. It may be that the apostle intended to intimate that the divisions and factions which so disgraced and embarrassed the Corinthian church, ch. i. 11, 12, grew out of just such conceit

3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols,

and pride of knowledge. Not being mingled with love, it induced them to wrangle with each other instead of striving to do good to all. Much as they thought they knew, and vain as they were of their knowledge, they knew nothing as they ought to know it, because they ought to know it as a means of benefiting their brethren.

3. *But if any man love God.* Love to God implies love to men and a desire to do them good. All apparent or imagined love to God is spurious, unless love to mankind be mingled with it. 1 John iv. 20, 21. But pure love, such as is worthy of the name, strives to benefit others. See note on Rom. xiii. 10. And such love must accompany knowledge, to make it truly valuable as a guide to the conduct of men. ¶ *Is known of him.* Is approved by him; for so the word is sometimes used. See note on Rom. vii. 15. The idea, according to this interpretation, is this:—You justify the eating of meats offered to idols, because you know that “an idol is nothing in the world.” But if you are guided by that knowledge alone, and do that which injures your less-enlightened brethren, it leads you astray, and you miss the divine approval. On the other hand, if you truly love God, and consequently love men, your knowledge will be tempered with love, and you will not only regard your own liberty but will also endeavor to promote the welfare of others, and will thus be approved of God. Others interpret the passage thus:—If any man love God, he (that is God) is known by him; that is, truly known, in opposition to that imperfect knowledge mentioned in ver. 2. Either interpretation gives a good sense, and neither does any violence to the original.

4. *As concerning therefore, &c.* Having interposed the caution against an undue reliance on knowledge alone,

we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that *there is none other God but one.*

5 For though there be that are called Gods, whether in

by way of parenthesis, the apostle returns to the consideration of the subject announced in ver. 1. ¶ *The eating of those things, &c.* The form of the question is slightly varied, without changing its character. The real question at issue was, whether Christians might lawfully eat meats which had been sacrificed to idols, either in the temples or elsewhere. ¶ *We know that an idol is nothing in the world.* No such being exists as is supposed to be represented by the image. The whole system is delusive. Some of the idols, to be sure, represented men who had once lived, and were afterwards regarded as gods; but although they might exist as spirits, it is here affirmed that they had no existence as gods. Other idols represented animals of various kinds; but although such animals might still exist, they did not exist as gods. See note on Rom. i. 23. Others represented supposed deities, such as Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto, and the like; but their existence was altogether imaginary. The most intelligent of the heathen philosophers were conscious of this; but they supposed some machinery of the kind was necessary for the proper government of the common people. Hence the whole system of idolatry, with its rites, and ceremonies, and false doctrines. See note on Rom. i. 18. ¶ *And that there is none other God but one.* There is but one God. There is but one Being in the universe who is entitled to supreme worship as God. The same idea is repeated and amplified in ver. 6.

5. *For though there be that are called gods.* It was a notorious fact that the heathens worshipped and offered sacrifices to multitudes of so-called gods, who, though they were actually nothing, were supposed to exist. ¶ *Whether in heaven or in earth.* Some of these imaginary gods, such as Jupiter and other higher powers, were supposed to

heaven or on earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)

6 But to us *there is but one*

reside in heaven; others, like Pan, on the earth, and like Neptune, in the sea. ¶ *As there be gods many.* "As there are, in fact, many which are so called or regarded. It is a fact that the heathens worship many whom they esteem to be gods, or whom they regard as such. This cannot be an admission of Paul that they were truly gods, and ought to be worshipped; but it is a declaration that they esteemed them to be such, or that a large number of imaginary beings were thus adored. The emphasis should be placed on the word *many*; and the design of the parenthesis is to show that the number of these that were worshipped was not a few, but was immense; and that they were in fact worshipped as gods, and allowed to have the influence over their minds and lives which they would have if they were real; that is, that the effect of this popular belief was to produce just as much fear, alarm, superstition, and corruption, as though these imaginary gods had a real existence." — *Barnes.* ¶ *And lords many.* The foregoing remarks are equally applicable here. The heathen divinities were generally styled gods, though they were occasionally called lords. Probably the apostle used both the words here chiefly as a contrast to the "one God" and "one Lord" in the next verse.

6. *But to us.* To Christians. If the apostle was speaking generally of the fact of the divine unity, it would be proper to understand him to mean all men by *us*; because, as a matter of fact, there is only one God to all men, or over all men. But he here speaks with special reference to an acknowledged fact, or to a fact as acknowledged by men. As the heathens acknowledged more than one god, they are not here included. Although the Jews acknowledged only one God, the apostle was not here speaking of them, and they are not included. The contrast is between the heathens and Christians; and hence by *us* he means Christians only. ¶ *There is but one*

God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by

God. The first three words were supplied by the translators, not improperly, though with some loss of vigor in the expression. To us, one God. We acknowledge one, and one only. ¶ *The Father.* The Jewish conception of God was Power, manifested as Creator and Governor. Christ's conception of him was Love, manifested as Father. It is a significant fact, that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke so seldom and so little of God, and so much and so frequently of the Father. He taught us that we sustain a much more intimate relationship to the supreme divinity than that merely of subjects of his government. He taught us to regard God as a father and friend, whose affection toward us exceeds that of earthly parents, and whose administration is conducted on paternal principles. Matt. vi. 25-34; vii. 7-12. Such also was Paul's conception of the divine character. He acknowledged God as the sovereign Ruler of the universe; but as a Ruler who was also the Father of his subjects, in whom they might safely confide for all things necessary to their highest good. It is observed by a judicious Trinitarian writer, that "the word Father here is not used as applicable to the first person of the Trinity, as distinguished from the second, but is applied to God *as* God; not as the Father in contradistinction from the Son, but to the divine nature as such, without reference to that distinction; the Father as distinguished from his offspring, the works that owe their origin to him. The apostle speaks of God, of the divine nature, the one infinitely holy Being, as sustaining the relation of Father to his creatures. He produced them. He provides for them. He protects them, as a father does his children. He regards their welfare; pities them in their sorrows; sustains them in trial; shows himself to be their friend." — *Barnes.* Such is the one God who was revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ. Matt. xi 27. Such is the one God whom Paul acknowledged.

whom *are* all things, and we by him.

And such is the one God whom all Christians should acknowledge and worship and love. ¶ *Of whom are all things, &c.* He is the original fountain and source of all created things; and all events in the universe, natural, moral, and spiritual, are under his direction and according to his pleasure. Rev. iv. 11. See note on Rom. xi. 36. ¶ *And we in him.* Or *to him*, as many translate the word. "And unto whom we live."—*Conybeare*. We live in him, we are constantly blessed by his bounteous gifts, and to him should be devoted our love, gratitude, and obedience. ¶ *And one Lord Jesus Christ.* Paul acknowledged, and we should acknowledge, Jesus Christ, as the representative of the divine majesty; as the vicegerent, so to speak, of the Supreme Ruler; the express image of God. Heb. i. 3. His delegated power shall continue and be exercised over mankind until the purpose for which it was bestowed shall be fully accomplished. Then, and not until then, the Son shall surrender the kingdom to the Father, "that God may be all in all," ch. xv. 24–28. ¶ *By whom are all things.* Through whom; by whose agency, as the servant of God. "To us Christians, there is but one sovereign God, the Father, of whom are all things, and to whom, as supreme, we are to direct all our services; and but one Lord-agent, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things that come from the Father to us, and through whom alone we find access unto him."—*Locke*. By all things in the text, some understand the universe; but if this interpretation be allowed, it must be remembered that all the power of Jesus, whether creative or other, was delegated to him, and that the Father is the only supreme God. Our Lord uniformly confessed his dependence on God, and his inability to do anything without divine assistance. John v. 19, 30; xvii. 2. The better opinion is, that "all things" denote the "new creation," or the things pertaining to what is denominated the kingdom of Christ, or of God, or of heaven. See

7 Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for

note on Matt. iii. 2. Over this kingdom Jesus Christ was appointed Lord or vicegerent, and its laws were announced by him, as the representative of the Father. ¶ *And we by him.* "Almost all recent commentators recognize only a moral creation, and explain the Greek phrase, and we (Christians) are by him (what we are); that is, regenerated and saved. See 1 Pet. i. 21. This view is confirmed in Theodorate, cited in Recens. Synop. and adopted by Mr. Townsend."—*Bloomfield*. The general idea embraced in the whole verse is very simple; however many gods, principal or subordinate, the heathens may imagine to exist, we acknowledge only one supreme God, our heavenly Father, and only one subordinate being who is fully authorized to speak and act in his name, the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. *Howbeit*. Nevertheless. The apostle thus introduces a very important fact, which Christians were bound to consider in connection with the general truth before mentioned. He admits that their knowledge was accurate, that idols were nothing, and that there is actually but one God. But whether they could properly act upon that knowledge, and lawfully partake of things sanctified to idols, depended upon another fact, which he proceeded to mention. ¶ *There is not in every man that knowledge.* Some of your brethren are not yet fully enlightened; their minds are still clouded by Jewish traditions and Gentile fables. Although it is true, generally speaking, that "we all have knowledge," that "an idol is nothing," and that "there is but one God," yet there are exceptions to the rule; for some have not this knowledge, but are "weak in the faith." See notes on Rom. xiv. 1, 2. ¶ *For some with conscience of the idol.* With a firm belief in the real existence of the idol. "A conscientious fear of the idol."—*Conybeare*. This was true in regard to both Jews and Gentiles who had been converted to a general faith in the gospel; yet with this difference: the Jew had been instructed

some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8 But meat commendeth us

to regard idols with abhorrence, and their worship as an utter abomination; but the Gentiles had been accustomed to regard them with reverence or fear, and to offer sacrifices as a meritorious service. The Jewish converts are probably referred to in Rom. ch. xiv., as so weak in the faith that they abstained from eating sacrificial meats under any circumstances, through fear of pollution. We cannot suppose they would be induced to eat in the manner here described, and must therefore understand the apostle to refer to the Gentile portion of the church. Some of these, acknowledging only one true God, seem yet to have regarded idols as the representatives of intermediate deities, who had an actual existence, and who were to be revered or feared according to their several characters. In this manner they retained "conscience of the idol." ¶ *Eat it as a thing offered unto an idol.* Encouraged by the example of their more enlightened brethren, ver. 10, they became partakers of idolatrous feasts, notwithstanding they regarded the food as having been offered to an invisible but actually existing being, which the image was supposed to represent. ¶ *And their conscience being weak, is defiled.* "Is defiled by a sense of sin, which would not have been the case in a stronger conscience." — *Stanley.* Weakness of conscience here manifestly indicates an unenlightened conscience; the lack of knowledge that idols were nothing, and that meats were neither the better nor the worse for having been offered to them. Lacking such knowledge, it was sinful in them to unite in the feasts. Rom. xiv. 23. Various inducements to such participation in idolatrous feasts have been supposed; such as a fondness for convivial entertainments, a desire to please their heathen neighbors by a show of courtesy and good-fellowship,

not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours be-

an unwillingness to give offence by appearing to disapprove the professedly religious services of others, or a desire to avoid persecution, as contemners of things deemed sacred. For these or other reasons, they might eat, though they doubted the lawfulness of it, and would thus be defiled or become guilty. And the temptation to do so would be the stronger, if they saw their more enlightened brethren do the same thing, ver. 10. It is hardly supposable that any convert to Christianity would eat, as some suppose, hoping to receive benefit from the idol, or at least to avoid the effects of his wrath, by joining in the sacrifice that was offered to him; though it must be confessed that some Christians at the present day retain superstitions nearly as absurd.

8. *But meat commendeth us not to God, &c.* At first sight, this would seem to mean, you have no occasion to offend your weaker brethren: your own duty to God consists not in thus eating meats: you are no better for eating, nor worse for abstaining. And this may be the true meaning; but the connection with ver. 9 appears to justify the common interpretation, which supposes the text to be "the argument by which the false teacher and his adherents justified their eating of the idol sacrifices. For they reasoned thus: Since the idol sacrifice consists of meat which the gospel allows us to eat, and the eating or the not eating of that meat hath no influence to make us either better or worse men, it is a part of our Christian liberty to eat of the idol sacrifice, if we choose to do it. That this is the import of their argument is evident from ver. 9, when the apostle replies, 'Nevertheless, take heed, lest perhaps this liberty or right of yours become a stumbling-block to the weak.'" — *Macknight.*

9. *But take heed, &c.* The apostle here calls attention to the principle

come a stumbling-block to them that are weak.

10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall

announced in ver. 1. Men are to be guided in their conduct not only by their own knowledge, but by a tender regard to the welfare of others. Admitting that the eating of sacrificial meats is a thing indifferent in itself, be cautious that the exercise of your liberty does not prove injurious to others; for not every man hath this knowledge, ver. 7. ¶ *This liberty of yours.* Your liberty, or power, or right, to eat meats without reference to any ritual or ceremonial uncleanness they may be supposed to possess, and even though they may have been sacrificed unto idols. You may have abstract rights which cannot be exercised with a due regard to the welfare of others. You should regard not only your duty to God, but your duty also to your brethren. ¶ *Stumbling-block.* See note on Rom. xiv. 13. ¶ *To the weak.* To those whose knowledge of Christian liberty is not so perfect; to those who still entertain superstitious opinions concerning idols. See note on ver. 7. In the following verse, the apostle puts a strong case, illustrating the importance of the caution here given.

10. *For if any man.* Any of the weak brethren before mentioned. Some think those also are included, who favorably regarded but had not yet embraced Christianity. ¶ *See thee, which hast knowledge.* Even if they are not conscious that your knowledge is more accurate and extensive than theirs, they recognize you as a professed Christian, and they presume, and have a right to presume, that you intend to conduct agreeably to the principles of the gospel. ¶ *Sit at meat.* Partake of the feast or entertainment. ¶ *In the idol's temple.* The word *εἰδωλείω* does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is only used by Jewish writers, apparently as the name by which they designated heathen temples, to avoid applying to them the

not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

11 And through thy knowl-

sacred word *ναός*, used to express the temple of Jerusalem."—*Stanley.* ¶ *Be emboldened, &c.* The same word is often translated *edified*. The figure is taken from architecture, where upon a foundation materials are placed, and by the gradual accumulation an edifice is completed. A desire exists in the mind; by the encouragement which it receives from various sources it gradually strengthens into a resolution; the act follows. The sense is well expressed in the translation. Men are imitative, and prone "to follow a multitude to do evil," Exo. xxiii. 2, as well as to copy the example of the good. They are accustomed also to measure themselves by each other, and to imagine that it must be right for them to do whatever is done by others who are reputed to be Christians. If a man desired to eat in the idol's temple, for personal enjoyment, as an act of good fellowship, or as a means of avoiding persecution, as seems to be intimated in ch. x. 13, and doubted the lawfulness of so doing, he would naturally be emboldened to gratify his desire by the example of his brethren, especially of those who boasted of superior knowledge, and whose claims were perhaps generally allowed. Other objections are urged in ch. x.; but here the apostle only objects to the use of liberty by those who have knowledge, as an evil example, tending to injure others.

12. *And through thy knowledge.* Because you know that meats are indifferent, will you persist in eating under such circumstances as to endanger the welfare of your weaker brethren? ¶ *Shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?* See notes on Rom. xiv. 15, 20. The argument is this. One who has knowledge and is perfectly assured that an idol is nothing, and that meats offered to idols are not actually polluted, and who may thus be able to partake of them with-

edge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

out in any manner acknowledging the existence of more than one God, may do so, and the act is not sinful in itself; yet it may be sinful when its consequences are taken into the account. A weak brother may imitate the act, without being able to comprehend the motives of him who is strong; he reasons simply thus: If it be right for my brother to eat, it is equally right for me: yet through lack of knowledge, and under the influence of old superstitions, he cannot perceive the real propriety of the act; as he still thinks the meat unclean, to him it is unclean; he doubts, and is condemned. Rom. xiv. 14, 20, 23. The example of the strong, though not sinful in itself, becomes sinful when it induces the weak brother to imitate it, who does not comprehend its propriety.

12. *But when ye sin so against the brethren.* That is by wounding their weak consciences, encouraging them to do what they do not clearly perceive to be right. The law which requires us to love others as we love ourselves is thus violated. ¶ *Ye sin against Christ.* Evil or good done to a disciple of Christ is regarded as done to the Master. See notes on Matt. xxv. 40, 45. Moreover, wilful or unnecessary injuries to others are a clear act of disobedience to the great law of love, announced by Christ. The apostle thus comes back to the principle stated in ver. 1, that knowledge without love is not a safe guide of conduct; but that Christians should consider what effect their actions will have on others, and be reasonably sure that the weaker brethren will not be injured, before they exercise the largest liberty allowed by the gospel in things indifferent; — things which do not benefit the doer nor injure him who refrains, ver. 8. Well ascertained duties are to be

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

performed, at whatever hazard. Paul never allowed himself to be turned aside from duty by fear of consequences. But the eating of meats did not belong to this category. It was a matter of duty to refrain, if one considered it wrong; but it was only a question of choice, if one considered it right. Under such circumstances, the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak, and exercise a spirit of self-denial, out of regard to weak consciences.

13. *Wherefore.* In accordance with the principle already stated, the conclusion adopted by the apostle, as to his own duty under such circumstances. ¶ *If meat make my brother to offend.* If my eating of meat have a tendency to cause or encourage my brother to do that which his own conscience will not justify, ver. 10. This is the sense which the context indicates. ¶ *I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.* I will never again eat flesh. Paul would not allow any one to encroach on his liberty in Christ Jesus, nor would he be in subjection to bondage. Gal. ii. 3-5. But he was always ready to deny himself in things indifferent, for the advantage of his brethren. This willingness he illustrates in the next chapter, by an appeal to his general conduct. If any one had insisted that he had no right to eat meat, he would have resolutely asserted his right, and would have exercised it. But he was perfectly ready to refrain from its exercise, if there were danger of injury to others. He probably refers here to the eating of meat in the idol's temple, as this is the particular subject under discussion; but his rule was general, and he was ready to apply it in regard to meats under other circumstances, if the good of his brethren required it. See note on Rom. xiv. 21.

CHAPTER IX.

AM I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen

CHAPTER IX.

The object of this chapter is twofold: (1.) To show that Paul's willingness to deny himself in regard to indifferent things, ch. viii. 13, was a general characteristic of his spirit, which is illustrated by several examples; (2.) to vindicate his apostleship against the aspersions of his adversaries, by showing that he actually possessed certain rights which he forbore to exercise out of tenderness to others. "In order to present clearly to the Corinthians a self-denial of freedom lawful in itself, from Christian love, the apostle offers himself and his procedure as a pattern and example. We must, nevertheless, confess that if this alone had been Paul's intention, first, the passage might have been considerably curtailed, and next, the subject would have continued uninterruptedly (ch. viii. 1) from this point, instead of having much that was irrelevant interwoven with it. This can only be explained by the fact, that Paul, without letting fall the principal theme to which he returns in ch. x. 14, takes occasion in describing his procedure as an example for all (ch. xi. 1) to defend himself on those points which had been made objects of attack by the adverse parties in Corinth." — *Olshausen*. In this view of the apostle's design, in which commentators generally agree, it will be seen that the whole chapter is designed to illustrate and enforce, by personal example, the duty of the strong to forbear the full exercise of their Christian liberty, lest the weak should be led astray; at the same time the writer asserts and vindicates his claims to the apostleship, in proof that he actually possessed such Christian liberty. "Thus the whole chapter is an incidental discussion of the subject of his apostleship, in illustration of the sentiment advanced in ch. viii. 13, that he was willing to practise self-denial for the good of others." — *Barnes*. And the whole

Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to

discussion has a direct bearing upon the general question stated in ch. viii. 1, in regard to the duty of enlightened Christians "touching things offered unto idols."

1. *Am I not an apostle?* This question lies at the basis of what follows, concerning certain rights which Paul possessed, but forbore to exercise, willing to deny himself rather than to injure others. It seems that some of the false teachers at Corinth denied that he was a true apostle, for reasons which afterwards appear in this chapter. This objection he meets with interrogatories equivalent to assertions, establishing his claim to the apostleship, and to all its rights and privileges; and then proceeds to declare that if he forbore the exercise of such rights and privileges, it was not because he lacked the liberty, but because he was willing to practise self-denial. ¶ *Am I not free?* Do I not possess Christian liberty in its full extent? Am I not entitled to all the rights of an apostle? The special rights referred to, besides that which he had already declared his willingness to forego, ch. viii. 13, are those of the domestic relations, ver. 5, and of maintenance by the church, 7-15, both of which Paul had forbore to exercise. It is generally supposed that his forbearance had encouraged some of his opposers to assert that he dared not insist upon these rights because he was conscious that he was not a true apostle. ¶ *Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* Equivalent to, I have seen the Lord Jesus Christ. The assertion is made in direct terms, ch. xv. 8, and more at length, Acts xxii. 3-10; xxvi. 12-18. "Paul saw the Lord twice. First in his journey to Damascus, when he was marked out for an apostle; secondly, in his trance at Jerusalem, when he was marked out for the apostle of the Gentiles. Acts xxii. 21. He alone, among the apostles, saw the Lord after his ascension." — *Lightfoot*. "The apostles being chos-

you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

en to be witnesses of the resurrection, it was requisite that St. Paul, being called to that office, should also see him risen. Hence Ananias speaks thus to him: 'The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst see the Just One, and shouldest hear the words of his mouth; for thou shalt be his witness to all men of what thou hast seen and heard.' Acts xxii. 14, 15; xxvi. 16. Accordingly, we find that Christ was seen of him, ch. xv. 8; yea, often appeared to him after his resurrection, Acts xviii. 9, and xxii. 18; and that he was taught the gospel by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ. Gal. i. 12." — *Whitby*. Paul frequently appeals to this fact, apparently admitting that this mark of apostleship was essential. ¶ *Are ye not my work in the Lord?* Were ye not converted by my ministry? Was not I the instrument by which ye were called into the church? A special circumstance connected with his labors at Corinth is mentioned in the following note. But on general principles he claims that their conversion was a proof of his apostleship, because God had blessed his labors as he would not bless the labors of an impostor pretending to speak in his name.

2. *If I be not an apostle to others, &c.* If the Corinthians had never witnessed the proofs of his apostleship elsewhere, they could not deny those which had been exhibited among themselves. Suppose I have not proved myself to be an apostle to others, doubtless I have given you sufficient evidence. ¶ *The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.* Ye are living witnesses that I am an apostle. I claimed to be such, and God blessed my labors. "My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power," ch. ii. 4. "The signs of an apostle were wrought among you, in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." 2 Cor. xii. 12. The signs which I exhibited to you were a sufficient proof. You accepted the proof, and believed my word. The

3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this:

Lord blessed the word to your conversion. Thus you became the seal of mine apostleship. As long as you believe your conversion to be genuine, you have sufficient evidence that I am no impostor, but that my claim is well-founded and abundantly authenticated by the miraculous powers which you have witnessed.

3. *Mine answer.* The word ἀπολογία in the Scriptures denotes something beyond what is indicated by the English word *apology*, and implies a conclusive answer or defence. It is translated *answer* here and in Acts xxv. 16; 2 Tim. iv. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 15; *defence*, in Acts xxii. 1; Phil. i. 7, 17; and *clearing*, 2 Cor. vii. 11. It does not occur elsewhere. It indicates here a sufficient defence against his accusers; and the imagery is drawn from courts of law. ¶ *To them that do examine me.* Or condemn me, or pass judgment upon me. See note on ch. iv. 3, where the same word occurs. The meaning is, to them that condemn me as a false pretender to the apostleship. This is a manifest allusion to the false teachers, who attempted to increase their own influence over the church by destroying the reputation and authority of Paul. ¶ *Is this.* Commentators differ, as to the reference of these words. Some apply them to what precedes: as if he had said, This is my defence against those who deny my apostleship; I have nothing to add to it. The more common opinion is that the words refer to what follows; in which case the course of thought may be expressed thus: To those who arrogantly sit in judgment on my official character, and pronounce me to be not an apostle because I forbear to insist on all apostolical rights and privileges, I give this answer:—My forbearance to exercise those rights is not occasioned by any doubts of my authority, but it is a self-denial to which I willingly submit for the good of others; just as I am willing to refrain from meats, lest my indulgence might lead others astray, ch. viii. 13.

4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?

5 Have we not power to lead

4. *Have we not power to eat and to drink?* Some suppose this question refers to the main subject stated in ch. viii. 1. Have not we, the apostles, the power, the right, or liberty, to eat and drink even "things offered unto idols?" Yet I freely renounce that right out of respect to others; and ye ought to do likewise. Others, probably with more accuracy, connect this verse with what follows, and understand the apostle to speak of the right of maintenance to which all the apostles were entitled, but which he did not enforce. "The right which all the ministers of the word had to be maintained by their disciples, the apostle expressed by a right to eat and to drink, because Christ had said to the twelve, 'Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses; for the workman is worthy of his meat.' Matt. x. 9, 10. In like manner to the seventy, 'In the same house abide, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his hire.' Luke x. 7. The word *power* does not express the apostle's meaning. Power is only an ability to do a thing; whereas the apostle means a *right* to do what he is speaking of."—*Macknight*. Paul's adversaries seem to have alleged that the apostles claimed the right to be maintained by their disciples; but Paul did not avail himself of this right, and therefore he was conscious that he did not possess it: in other words, he was conscious that he was not a true apostle. To this allegation Paul replies: I am an apostle; I have this right; for his interrogations are designed to express the strongest affirmation, which is enforced by several arguments which follow. But, he continues, I do not use my liberty, not because I doubt my authority to do so, but because I desire the highest good of those among whom I labor.

5. *Have we not power?* Have we not a right? See note on ver. 4. ¶ *To lead about.* To take with us as companions in our journeyings, and to have them maintained by the churches,

about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

as the course of the argument manifestly implies. ¶ *A sister, a wife.* "This phrase has greatly perplexed commentators. But the simple meaning seems to be, a wife who should be a Christian, and regarded as sustaining the relation of a Christian sister."—*Barnes*. ¶ *As well as other apostles.* "Like the rest of the apostles."—*Conybeare*. "As do also the other apostles."—*Haweis*. Literally, *as also the other apostles*. It is implied that the apostles, generally speaking, were married, and that their wives, sometimes at least, accompanied them in their missionary labors. The same fact is recognized by the early historians, and by the tradition of the church. ¶ *And as the brethren of the Lord.* See note on Matt. xiii. 55, where "James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas," are styled "brethren" of our Lord. In the early part of our Lord's ministry, his brethren did not believe him, John vii. 5, and even represented him as "beside himself," not in a fit condition to go at large. See note on Mark iii. 21. It would seem they afterwards believed and became laborers in the gospel ministry. ¶ *And Cephas.* Peter. See note on Matt. xvi. 18. "From this we learn that Peter, here called by his original name, continued to live with his wife after he became an apostle; also, that Peter, as an apostle, possessed no rights which were not common to Paul, and to all the rest. These facts I mention because, traced to their obvious consequences, they utterly subvert the main pillars of popery."—*Macknight*. "Peter and the brethren of the Lord are mentioned especially as being those most esteemed by the Jewish party, at whom the apostle here glances,—Peter, as the head of the Jewish church, the brethren of the Lord as closely connected by earthly lineage with our Lord, and one of them probably the head of the church at Jerusalem."—*Stanley*. There are grave doubts, however, whether the apostle James, who presided over the church at Jeru-

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

7 Who goeth a warfare any

salem, was one of "the brethren of the Lord." See note on Matt. xiii. 55. It is generally supposed that Paul designed in this verse to assert the right of maintenance for himself and for his wife, if he chose to marry. It is not improbable, however, that he had the further design to refer to his celibacy as another instance of his self-denial. He did not abstain from marriage on account of its unlawfulness, or because he had no right to marry, ch. vii. 28. He had an equal right with the other apostles to form a matrimonial connection. But he refrained, for the purpose of devoting himself more exclusively to the propagation of the gospel. He denied himself, for the benefit of others; and this was the great duty which he taught in ch. viii., and which it was the object of this chapter to enforce by an appeal to his own example.

6. *Or I only and Barnabas.* "From this expression one would indeed think that the Judaizing Christians, who were the main cause of St. Paul's uneasiness in this respect, had a peculiar spleen against those two apostles of the uncircumcision, who were so instrumental in procuring and publishing the Jerusalem decree, which determined the controversy so directly in favor of the believing Gentiles. It seems probable from ver. 12, that Barnabas supported himself by the labor of his hands when at Corinth, as well as St. Paul." — *Doddridge.* ¶ *Have not we power to forbear working?* That is, at manual employment, for our own maintenance. In other words, are we only excepted from the general rule, and have we alone no right to be maintained by the church, like the other apostles? In a subsequent portion of the chapter, Paul distinctly declares, what is here implied, that they relinquished a public maintenance, not because they had no right to demand it, but because they would not be burdensome to the brethren; they practised self-denial for the good of others.

time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and

7. The right of apostles and ministers of the word to a maintenance by the church, is illustrated by an appeal to the ordinary affairs of life, in this verse; to the Mosaic law, in ver. 8-12; to the established custom of the Jewish priesthood, in ver. 13; and to the express command of the Lord Jesus, in ver. 14. The reference to the ordinary affairs of life embraces three examples, military, agricultural, and pastoral. ¶ *Who goeth a warfare.* Who performs the duties of a soldier. The Christian life is sometimes compared by this apostle to a warfare, 1 Tim. i. 18; and he exhorts his beloved son in the faith, his co-worker in the gospel ministry, to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. ii. 3. But the reference here is doubtless to military men, in the ordinary sense of the word. It was their duty, not only to preserve the life and property of their friends, but to slay and destroy their enemies. Was the labor of an apostle less meritorious? The soldier, by common consent, is entitled to fair compensation. The most which the scriptures require of him, in this respect, is that he be content with his wages. Luke iii. 14. And is not he who devotes his time, his talents, his strength, his life, to the task of promoting the happiness of mankind, as well entitled to a comfortable provision for his wants, as he whose occupation, however beneficial on the whole, almost necessarily involves the misery and destruction of many? ¶ *At his own charges.* See note on Luke iii. 14, where the same word is translated *wages.* ¶ *Who planteth a vineyard, &c.* What inducement has the husbandman to plant, unless he may expect also to gather? Labor is encouraged by the right of private property. Society could not well exist without it. Permanent improvements, cultivation with reference to a distant harvest, would be neglected, unless the cultivator might expect to derive his maintenance from the

eateth not of the milk of the flock?

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

9 For it is written in the law

fruits of his labor. Not only is such reward secured for his encouragement, but it is regarded as his just due. So, also, if the faithful minister labor in the moral vineyard, and strive, by cultivating the Christian graces and pruning the vicious propensities, to make men fruitful in good works, it is just that he should be maintained, as a recompense for his services. ¶ *Or who feedeth a flock, &c.* In the East, one principal occupation was the tending of flocks; and from this occupation some of the most beautiful images in the scriptures are drawn. See notes on John xxi. 15, 16. The shepherd is always allowed a maintenance by the owner of the flock, so also is he justly entitled to a maintenance who devotes his life to the care and nourishment of the flock of Christ. By these three examples, the apostle shows that what he claims as the right of faithful ministers, is allowed to be just in the ordinary affairs of life.

8. *Say I these things as a man?* Do I thus speak without any higher than human authority? ¶ *Or, saith not the law the same also?* Doth not the Mosaic law recognize the same principle? namely, that the faithful laborer justly deserves a maintenance? The Jewish portion of the church, to whom this question was addressed, acknowledged the abiding force of the moral precepts contained in the law, whether they continued to observe the ritual or not.

9. *For it is written, &c., Deut. xxv.*

4. Of course the apostle does not claim that the passage quoted originally referred to ministers of the gospel. He quotes it as a proper illustration of the principle for which he contends. ¶ *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox.* The practice of muzzling the mouths of oxen, dogs, and other animals, yet exists, and retains its name. It consists in fastening a strap around

of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

10 Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes,

the jaws, sufficiently tight to prevent the animal from biting; or in placing a basket over the mouth, fastened to the head, by which eating is prevented, but breathing is not made difficult. This prohibition is often quoted as an evidence of the humane character of the Jewish law. Even the comfort of brutes was provided for; the Sabbath was a day of rest to them as well as to men; and they were not to be prevented from satisfying the cravings of hunger, when laboring in the midst of food. ¶ *That treadeth out the corn.* Anciently, and even now, in the East, cattle were driven over the grain, which was placed in heaps for the purpose, instead of threshing it by the modern processes. See note on Matt. iii. 12. *Corn* denoted grain generally, whether corn, wheat, rye, or aught else which might be converted into bread. ¶ *Doth God take care for oxen?* Paul does not deny that God takes care for oxen, and that he gave this command for their benefit. The force of his question is, Doth God take care exclusively for oxen? Was this command designed for their benefit alone? Was it not rather the declaration of an important principle, universal in its application? The divine laws are not partial, but universal in their character; the great principles of justice, equity, and mercy, underlie them all.

10. *Or said he it altogether for our sakes?* The meaning is, not that this command was given *exclusively* for the benefit of ministers or men; for this is contrary to its plain language. The word *πάντως*, here translated *altogether*, has the same translation in ch. v. 10; but it is rendered *surely*, in Luke iv. 23; *all means*, in Acts xviii. 21; 1 Cor. ix. 22; *must needs*, in Acts xxi. 22; *no doubt*, in Acts xxviii. 4; *no wise*, in Rom. iii. 9; *at all*, in ch. xvi. 12. *Certainly* or *surely* would express

no doubt, *this* is written : that he that plougheth should plough in hope ; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

the meaning of the word here with sufficient accuracy. The idea is, Hath God so spoken with exclusive reference to the welfare of oxen, or did he certainly design our benefit also ? Is this an arbitrary command, limited to a single case ? or does it express a general principle, applicable to all cases ? ¶ *For our sakes, doubtless, this is written.* It is doubtless a general principle of equity and mercy, which should govern men in their transactions with each other, as well as in their treatment of beasts. This is all which the language necessarily implies. No exclusive reference was made by Moses to ministers or any other class of men ; but the principle on which his command was founded was applicable to all. ¶ *That he that plougheth, &c.* He who cultivates the earth should have a reasonable hope of remuneration, else he has no encouragement to labor. In like manner God's husbandmen should have hope of an equitable support. ¶ *And he that thresheth in hope, &c.* " And the thresher to thresh with hope to share in the produce of his toil."—*Conybeare.* The same idea is conveyed, as before, with a change of imagery.

11. *If we have sown unto you spiritual things.* The agricultural metaphor is continued. The preaching of the gospel is frequently described as the sowing of seed. Matt. xiii. 3-8, 18-23. If we have preached the gospel to you, and made you acquainted with its holy precepts and glorious promises. If we have encountered labor, and hardship, and exposed ourselves to persecution, in sowing the seeds of spiritual truth among you. ¶ *Is it a great thing, &c.* Is it more than equitable, that you should minister to our temporal wants ? Such is the argument drawn from the ordinary affairs of life, enforced by the principle on which the command to deal justly even with beasts is founded. The ox should share in the fruit of his labor. So also the soldier, the shep-

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things ?

12 If others be partakers of

herd, and the husbandman. And thus also is the faithful laborer in the gospel field entitled to maintenance, as an equivalent for his ministry in spiritual things. ¶ *Carnal things.* Things needful to the body, such as food and raiment. " But then Chrysostom and Theophylact observe, that he saith not, who goeth to warfare, and is not rich ? Who plants a vineyard, and heaps not up gold of the fruits of it ? Who feeds a flock, and makes not a merchandise of the sheep ? Teaching us, that the spiritual pastor should be content with little, and seek only what is necessary, not what is superfluous."—*Whitby.* In the apostolic age, the wants of preachers were simple and easily supplied ; and the apostle earnestly insists that they should be supplied by the church, as no more than an equitable acknowledgment of their services. If preachers had never demanded more, it may be doubted whether an unwillingness to respond would ever have been developed in the church. But the love of wealth and the pride of life have sometimes been manifested by the clergy, as well as by the laity. Their demands have sometimes been regarded as extravagant. It is not surprising that such demands should be unwillingly met by the people ; and that through unwillingness to minister to extravagance, they should not always provide cheerfully even things necessary and convenient. In the present day, a clergyman may reasonably claim to be placed, in " carnal things," on an equality with his people ; that is, to be enabled to live as well as they do, and make as good provision for old age as they do, on the average. If they do not thus provide for him, they fail to do what the apostle enjoins. But if his heart be fixed on abundant riches and luxurious living, I see not how his claim can be maintained against the poor, by the apostle's language here.

this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

12. *If others.* Other apostles; other true ministers of the word. Perhaps Paul may have intended a reference to the false teachers at Corinth, who are supposed to have claimed and received a munificent reward for their labors. ¶ *Be partakers of this power.* Or this rightful claim for a maintenance. It does not appear that this right was denied to others; nor even to Paul; for his forbearance of this right was alleged against him as an evidence of his consciousness that he was not a true apostle. The charge against him was, not that he claimed a reward which he did not deserve; but that he did not claim what he did deserve, if he were a true apostle. In reply, he asserts his right distinctly; and then gives his reason for not claiming it; namely, that he was willing to deny himself, at much personal inconvenience, for their benefit, just as he was willing to abstain from meats, lest he should cause a weak brother to offend. Ch. viii. 13. It was a principle of love, not of fear, which actuated him. ¶ *Are not we rather?* Is not our claim stronger than theirs, since we laid the foundation on which they have builded, and sowed the seed which, at best, they have only cultivated? ¶ *Nevertheless we have not used this power.* We have claimed no support from you. We have maintained ourselves by our own labor. See Acts xviii. 3; xx. 34. ¶ *But suffer all things.* Or forbear the exercise of our lawful rights; and, rather than the gospel should be hindered, we endure privations, even actual hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and lack of permanent shelter, and also "labor, working with our own hands," ch. iv. 11, 12. ¶ *Lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.* Lest we should oppress and discourage you, by making the gospel burdensome, ver. 18; and lest our enemies should have any possible reason to accuse us of a mercenary spirit, and thus cast odium upon the

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

gospel itself. This is the point to which the whole preceding argument in this chapter is directed; namely, that, in accordance with the principle embraced in ch. viii. 13, he had been willing and accustomed to practise self-denial in things lawful, for the sake of the benefit which might result to others.

13. *Do ye not know, &c.* "To the observation, that he abstained from the exercise of the right belonging to him, Paul adds that he wished to give no offence to the gospel of Christ. This can, in agreement with Acts xx. 23, 33, seq., only be understood that he did not wish the gospel to be regarded as a means of worldly gain. Yet, unwilling for a moment to sanction the supposition that this was wrongly done by the other teachers, who made use of their lawful claim on the churches, he adduces in addition the parallel of the priesthood of the Old Testament, as a proof that the acceptance of maintenance by the preachers of the gospel was not unbecoming, and observes that living by the gospel was appointed to his followers in the words of our Lord himself."—*Olshausen.* ¶ *That they which minister about holy things.* Probably the Levites are referred to; for this portion of the argument seems to be chiefly addressed to the Jewish portion of the church. The fact alleged in the following words, however, was equally true of those among the heathen, who assisted in the idolatrous sacrifices. ¶ *Live of the things of the temple.* Have their share of those things which are offered in sacrifice, and thus derive a maintenance. ¶ *And they which wait at the altar.* The priests, whose business it was to place the sacrifices on the altar. ¶ *Are partakers with the altar?* A portion of the sacrifice was expressly appointed to be eaten by the priests. A part was to be burned, and a part to be thus eaten. Thus, the altar and the priests were partakers

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

with each other. For this legal provision made for the maintenance of both priests and Levites, see Lev. vi., vii., and Deut. xviii. 3-8. The argument is, if this was commanded as right and proper under the law, it must be equally right and proper now; for the principle is the same in both cases, that they who minister in spiritual things are entitled to a temporal maintenance. But the apostle does not leave the subject thus; he shows, in the next verse, that the Lord recognized this principle, and distinctly declared that it was yet in force.

14. *For even so hath the Lord ordained.* See Matt. x. 10; Luke x. 7. ¶ *That they which preach the gospel.* They who devote themselves to the work of the gospel. This includes not only the apostles, but all faithful ministers of the word. The same arrangement was made by our Lord, in the places last cited for the maintenance of the twelve apostles and of the seventy disciples. ¶ *Should live of the gospel.* "Should be supported and maintained in this work."—*Barnes.* Their maintenance should result from their work. They who hear the gospel and profit by it, are morally bound to maintain him who preaches it.

15. *But I have used none of these things.* The claim is just and equitable; but I have never enforced it. I had a right to a maintenance when I labored among you for eighteen months, making known to you Christ and him crucified as the foundation of your faith; but I did not claim it. I labored with my own hands, and supplied my wants by the practice of my handicraft. See Acts xviii. 1-11. The same course was pursued by Paul at Ephesus, Acts xx. 33-35, and probably at other places during his whole ministry, except while he was imprisoned. The fact was not denied by his adversaries: on the contrary, it was made the ground of an allegation against him. The allegation he re-

15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things that it should be so done unto me:

futes in this chapter, by vindicating his claims to the apostleship, and to all its rights and privileges; at the same time showing that his forbearance was induced by the same spirit which he manifested in ch. viii. 13. ¶ *Neither have I written these things, &c.* I have not thus proved my right to a maintenance, in order to enforce my claim, or to induce you to make provision for my wants. I do it merely to vindicate my right, and to repel the insinuation that I forbear its enforcement in consequence of any doubts as to my apostleship. Though I have this right, I do not even now desire to avail myself of it. I neither wish you to send me a supply for my wants, nor do I expect you to make provision for me when I next visit you. It accords better with the principles which guide my conduct, that I should decline a maintenance at your hands. ¶ *For it were better for me to die.* Death by want and privation seems to be here intended; for this only could be regarded as depending on the lack of that maintenance which he had a right to demand, but declined to receive. This is a strong expression, denoting the most intense earnestness. For the reason immediately assigned, he would rather suffer absolute starvation than depart from his uniform rule of "making the gospel of Christ without charge" to the brethren, ver. 18. ¶ *Than that any man should make my glorying void.* Or *rejoicing*, as the same word is translated in Gal. vi. 4; Phil. i. 26; Heb. iii. 6. His rejoicing, his conscious sense of having fully performed his duty, might be made void through accepting a maintenance, (1) by giving his adversaries an opportunity to say that he was mercenary, and that he preached the gospel for his individual profit; and (2) although he might know that such a charge was false, he would at least lose that peculiar joy which he experienced in the consideration that all his apostolic

for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid

labors were gratuitous, and that he devoted himself to the welfare of his brethren, solely from a desire to benefit them. "By preaching the gospel free of expense, the apostle rendered it the more acceptable to the Gentiles, and drew them the more readily to hear him. There was another reason, also, for his demanding no reward for preaching; namely, that in future ages mankind might be sensible that in preaching the gospel he was not animated by any worldly motive, but merely by a full persuasion of its truth. Foreseeing, therefore, that his disinterestedness would in all ages be a strong proof of the truth of the gospel, the apostle gloried in preaching it to all men without fee or reward."

— *Macknight*. It is manifest that Paul attached a peculiar value to the gratuitous character of his preaching, as will be seen more fully in the succeeding verses. He would not on any account be deprived of this source of rejoicing. But while he resolutely maintained his right to support by the church, he would rather die of want than to receive it.

16. *For though I preach the gospel, &c.* In ver. 15 the apostle speaks of his "glorying," or rejoicing, which he valued more highly than even life. In this and the following two verses, he indicates the foundation of that glorying. ¶ *I have nothing to glory of.* More literally, this is not glorying to me; or this is not the foundation of my glorying. "This gives me no cause of boasting." — *Conybeare*. "He here says that joy or glorying did not consist in the simple fact that he preached the gospel; for necessity was laid on him; there was some other cause and source of his joy or glorying than that simple fact, ver. 18. Others preached the gospel also; in common with them, it might be a source of joy that he preached the gospel;

upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation

but it was not the source of his peculiar joy, for he had been called into the apostleship in such a manner as to render it inevitable that he should preach the gospel. His glorying was of another kind." — *Barnes*. ¶ *For necessity is laid upon me.* Paul had received a personal command from the Lord Jesus to preach the gospel, and he could not conceive the idea of being "disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Acts xxvi. 12-20. Arrested as he had been in his career of wicked persecution, converted by a miraculous revelation of the Lord, and specially appointed to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, he felt irresistibly bound to be faithful in that service, under a moral necessity to preach. Mere obedience to this command, as a matter of necessity or unavoidable duty was no foundation for glorying or rejoicing. ¶ *Yea, woe is unto me, &c.* I should be justly miserable if I failed to preach the gospel in direct disobedience to the heavenly command. Paul could never forget that he had once been "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious"; and that the grace of our Lord, manifested in his forgiveness and call to the apostleship, was "exceeding abundant." 1 Tim. i. 13, 14. On the one hand, therefore, if he was simply obedient, he regarded it as a very slight acknowledgment of such rich favors, and instead of glorying in it, he would have esteemed himself as but an unprofitable servant, Luke xvii. 10; on the other, if he had proved disobedient, he would have regarded it as the most inexcusable ingratitude, and the sharpest stings of an outraged conscience would have followed. Under such circumstances, his glorying or rejoicing was not the result of merely preaching the gospel. It arose from something else.

17. *For if I do this thing willingly.*

of the gospel is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then?

“If I preach so as to show that my heart is in it; that I am not compelled. If I pursue such a course as to show that I prefer it to all other employments. If Paul took a compensation for his services, he could not well do this; if he did not, he showed that his heart was in it, and that he preferred the work to all others. Even though he had been in a manner compelled to engage in that work; yet he so acted in the work as to show that it had his hearty preference. This was done by his submitting to voluntary self-denials and sacrifices in order to spread the Saviour’s name.” — *Barnes*. “For if I do this thing willingly; if I choose to take nothing for preaching the gospel when I am under no obligation so to do, I have a special reward, and may glory in it; but if against my will I preach the gospel, yet am I under a necessity of doing this, and therefore cannot glory in it, or expect any special reward for it, since a dispensation of the gospel is committed to me, and so in that I only can discharge my trust.” — *Whitby*. ¶ *I have a reward*. See note on ver. 18. ¶ *But if against my will*. If I preach by constraint, merely by command, or through fear of the “woe” which accompanies disobedience; or if I preach for-hire, as I might seem to do, if I should receive compensation; in either case my service would appear to be rendered unwillingly. The idea is implied that such unwilling service receives no reward; and thus this clause forms a proper contrast with the preceding. ¶ *A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me*. Or, *stewardship* of the gospel. See Luke xvi. 2-4, where the same word occurs; a similar word is used in ch. iv. 1, 2. I must preach the gospel, whether willingly or unwillingly. Even if I go to the work like a slave under the eye of a task-master, I must perform it. But such service deserves no reward. This naturally introduces the question in the next verse.

18. *What is my reward then?* Ev-

Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that

idently the same which is mentioned in ver. 17, and that which was the cause or foundation of the apostle’s glorying, ver. 15, 16. It is generally understood by commentators that this reward consisted in happiness in the future life; in some peculiar mark of approbation to be bestowed in heaven; in a word, that it was a “reward in the world to come, which is promised to those who engage heartily, and laboriously, and successfully, in turning sinners to God.” But to this interpretation there are grave objections. (1.) Paul uniformly represented the blessings of the future life as bestowed freely by divine grace; never as the reward of works. See notes on Rom. iv. 4, 5; v. 21; xi. 35. The expectation of a reward in heaven for the performance of duties on the earth would be utterly inconsistent with his views of the doctrine of life and immortality. (2.) There is nothing in the context which requires us to suppose he was speaking of a reward after death, even if we could suppose him capable of believing that earthly services merited heavenly rewards. (3.) In ver. 15, he distinctly intimates that if he should receive maintenance from the Corinthians, his glorying would thereby become void. But he gloried in his reward; and if his glorying was made void, it would be because he failed to receive a reward. It surely needs no argument to show the absurdity of supposing that the Corinthians could deprive Paul of a peculiar reward in heaven by supplying his bodily wants on earth, which was, in fact, no more than their reasonable service. (4.) The apostle states precisely what this reward is, in the words immediately following the question. There is no necessity to conjecture what might be a proper reward, or what reward he probably anticipated. He has fully answered his own question, and we have no reason to doubt that he answered it correctly. ¶ *I may make the gospel of Christ without charge*. Without expense to those who are en-

I abuse not my power in the gospel.

lightened and blessed by it. ¶ *That I abuse not my power in the gospel.* That I do not exercise it to its full extent. Paul had already proved his right to demand and receive maintenance from the church. He chose to forbear the exercise of that right, because, among other things, he might otherwise hinder the progress of the gospel. Rather than thus to abuse his power, by exercising it in a manner prejudicial to the interests of his brethren, he was willing to deny himself, and to provide for his wants by manual labor. And this he had done, and he enjoyed and gloried in his reward, even the consciousness that he had made the gospel of Christ without charge, had not abused his power, and had thus attained the most satisfactory personal assurance, and given the most conclusive evidence to others, that his labors were animated by a spirit of love to his Master and love to his brethren. His bitterest adversaries could not accuse him of preaching for hire. His own conscience also bore witness that all his labors were performed, and all his sufferings endured, not with the hope of temporal gain, but with a single desire to honor Christ and benefit mankind. This consciousness was an abundant reward, and in this he gloried and rejoiced. "He here returns to the expression which he had used before; 'I have a reward for preaching the gospel willingly,' and asks in what it consists; to which the answer is, 'My reward is, that I have no reward.' He looks for no higher reward or pay, comp. 1 Tim. v. 18, than to preach the gospel without pay; he hopes for no higher freedom than to become the slave of all." — *Stanley*. "It is the only little matter of glorying I have, that I preach the gospel to you without expense. To preach the gospel to you, I am obliged; but that I give up my own advantages and rights for your sake, is my boast." — *Gilpin*. "How noble is this desire to do something voluntarily, over and above what he was bound to do, on the part of one

19 For though I be free from all men, yet I have made myself

who, though no victim of morbid memories, could not altogether efface from his heart its past history. Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, because necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel. But if I do this willingly, I have a reward. What, then, is my reward? Verily, that while I preach the gospel, I make the ministry of the gospel to be without recompense, — that I serve in love." — *Thom*. See also *Macknight*, quoted in note on ver. 15. Thus ends this illustration of Paul's willingness to practise self-denial in things lawful, for the benefit of his brethren; which willingness he affirmed in ch. viii. 13. In what follows he gives other illustrations of the same spirit.

19. *For though I be free from all men.* I am a freeman, and enjoy all the Christian liberty which belongs to a believer and an apostle, ver. 1. ¶ *Yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.* I have not only relinquished the right of maintenance which I was free to demand, that I might not hinder the gospel of Christ among you, but I have refrained from using my freedom among others also, for a similar reason; I have become a very slave to the prejudices and infirmities of men, so far as I could do so with a good conscience, that I might gain more converts to the gospel of Christ. Just as I regard the scruples of some, concerning meats, I regard also the scruples of others, in things lawful, that I may not wound their weak consciences, but may rather encourage them to hold fast the truth in righteousness. The paraphrase of ver. 19-23, by *Gilpin*, is brief and judicious. "For the same reason that I waive this right, I waive a number of others, for the benefit of those to whom I preach. As far as I can with a safe conscience, I become a Jew to the Jews, and a Gentile to the Gentiles. I put on infirmities with the weak and become all things to all men, that I may gain the more; submitting thus

servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are

under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not

to many inconveniences, for the sake of the gospel."

20. *I became as a Jew.* I conformed to their opinions and prejudices, so far as I could without compromising the principles of true Christian liberty. As instances of such conformity, may be mentioned his abstinence from meats which they regarded as unclean, ch. viii. 13, and Rom. ch. xiv.; his circumcision of Timothy, that he might not shock the prejudices of the Jews among whom he was about to labor, Acts xvi. 3; his shaving his own head in Cenchrea, after the manner of the Jews, Acts xviii. 18; and his observance of the ritual for ceremonial purification in the temple at Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 26, 27. Yet it must be remembered that while he thus yielded in things indifferent, for the sake of peace and to gain more ready access to their hearts, he would not sacrifice any principle by doing that which he regarded as intrinsically wrong; nor even in things indifferent would he conform on compulsion, or allow his Christian liberty to be abridged. Thus when certain Jews went from Jerusalem to Antioch, and insisted that the Gentile converts could not be saved unless they should be circumcised, and "certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed," required that they should also "keep the law of Moses," Paul withstood them manfully and so effectually that he procured a decree by the council of apostles, exempting the Gentiles from such observances. Acts xv. 1-29. And when certain false brethren attempted to bring him into bondage, he utterly refused to circumcise Titus, but asserted his liberty in Christ Jesus. Gal. ii. 3-5. He would do nothing which could be construed into an admission that his Christian liberty was unlawful, and even rebuked his fellow-apostle for so doing, Gal. ii. 11-17; yet he was willing voluntarily to forbear many of his

privileges, that he might the more easily gain the attention of the Jews, and be instrumental in their conversion and subsequent growth in grace and knowledge. ¶ *To them that are under the law, &c.* The law of Moses is doubtless intended. By those who were under the law, some understand the Jews who remained in Judea, who were naturally more devoted to the law than those who dwelt among the Gentiles; others understand the proselytes, who were Gentiles by birth, but had embraced the Jewish religion; but the greater number suppose the reference is to Jewish converts to Christianity, who still regarded the Mosaic law as binding. If the last be the true meaning, we must exclude the idea of conversion from the *gaining* of such, and understand by it the strengthening of their faith and their growth in knowledge. Otherwise the preceding remarks concerning conformity to the Jews are equally applicable here.

21. *To them that are without law, &c.* That is, the Gentiles, who were not originally subject to the Mosaic law, which is here intended, and were not brought under subjection to it by their conversion to Christianity. Their exemption from the yoke of this law was resolutely maintained by Paul, at the cost of much opposition from the Jews. And he would not, by his example among them, convey the impression that it remained binding on even the Jews who had embraced Christianity. Hence he neither urged them to adopt its rites and ceremonies, nor did he practise them himself. On the contrary, he lived as one not under that law. These rites and ceremonies he regarded as indifferent, lawfully observed or neglected. He would observe them, when among the Jews, to avoid exciting their prejudices; and for the same reason he would neglect them, when among the Gentiles. He would

without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

22 To the weak became I as

not, however, be compelled by the Jews to observe them as an absolute duty, nor could the Gentiles have compelled him to neglect them, as an absolute *wrong*, had they attempted to do so. ¶ *Being not without law to God, &c.* Not absolutely exempt from law; still owing allegiance to God, and subject to his law as revealed in his Son; free from the law of ordinances, but bound by that higher law of liberty, whose animating principle is love. "He became 'without law' by not observing the Mosaic law. This use of the word *ἀνομος*, however, being somewhat irregular, the apostle explains it by the parenthetical clause, which signifies 'not as though I were under no divine law, but under law towards Christ and the precepts of the Christian religion.'" — *Bloomfield*. ¶ *Under the law to Christ.* To love God supremely, and to love our fellowmen as we love ourselves, is the great law of Christ; obedience to it is manifested by worshipping God in spirit and in truth, and by doing unto others as we would that they should do unto us. See Matt. v. 43-48; vii. 12; xxii. 37-39; John iv. 23, 24. To this law Paul acknowledged himself subject; and it was in accordance with its requisites that he submitted to the various self-denials here enumerated, in order the more effectually to promote the welfare of his brethren.

22. *To the weak.* Weak in faith; scrupulous in regard to rites and ceremonies; not yet fully instructed in the law of Christian liberty. See note on Rom. xiv. 1. ¶ *Became I as weak.* I regarded their weakness; I conformed to their scruples in things indifferent; I did not fully use my liberty, lest I should grieve them; and thus, although I consider the use of meats to be lawful, I will wholly abstain, if it be offensive to them. Ch. viii. 13. ¶ *I am made all things to all men.* Having specified sundry particulars, the apos-

weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 And this I do for the gos-

tle here announces, in one general statement, the principle by which he was guided in his intercourse with mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles. As far as he could do so with a good conscience, he accommodated himself to the opinions and even prejudices, to the habits and customs, and to the religious observances of others. He did not oppose others, merely for the sake of opposition. When principle was at stake, no man was more firm and unyielding than he. But in regard to indifferent things, where one was made neither better nor worse by their observance or neglect, and where such observance or neglect was not required by others as an acknowledgment of a binding obligation, no man yielded more freely and gracefully. It is scarcely necessary to observe that Paul gives no intimation of a willingness to become a sinner among sinners, or to violate the moral law in any manner whatever; and that any such inference from his language is wholly unauthorized. He speaks exclusively of things lawful in themselves, but not required by law. ¶ *That I might by all means save some.* Or gain them, as in ver. 19, 20, 21; that is, convert them, or, if already converted, strengthen their faith and more fully enlighten them. The phraseology is changed, without any essential change in the idea. See note on ch. vii. 16.

23. *And this I do for the gospel's sake.* Equivalent to a similar expression in ver. 12, where, in reference to the privations and inconveniences which resulted from a lack of maintenance by the church, and the necessity for supplying his wants by manual labor, Paul declares that he willingly "suffered all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." So here, having spoken of other instances of self-denial, in conformity with the prejudices of the unenlightened and the weak, he says that these things he has also will-

pel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

ingly done for the sake of the gospel; that is, that he might not hinder, but might rather promote its advancement, and contribute to its success among men. ¶ *That I might be a partaker thereof with you.* The last two words are supplied by the translators. Commentators almost unanimously understand Paul to speak here of salvation in the future life, as the reward of his faithfulness; not considering, apparently, that he uniformly represented salvation as the gift of divine grace, not the reward of works, lest any man should boast. Yet there is at least one exception: "And this I do for the sake of the gospel, to promote its success to the utmost of my ability, that I also may be a sharer in the generous pleasure arising from the communication of it. We render it, 'that I might be partaker with you'; but as the words *with you* are not in the original, I rather understand the words as referring to the satisfaction he found in imparting the invaluable and inexhaustible blessings of the gospel to all around him; a sentiment most suitable to his character and office."—*Doddridge*. This interpretation fully harmonizes with the immediate context, and with the general scope of the whole discourse. At the hazard of repetition, it is proper to remark, that this chapter is designed generally to illustrate the principle embraced in ch. viii. 13, by an appeal to personal example. The apostle shows that he has uniformly acted on this principle of self-denial for the benefit of others. As an encouragement to his brethren to do likewise, he assures them that such a life of self-sacrifice has its peculiar reward, namely, the consciousness of having done right, with right motives. See note on ver. 18. He here refers to the same subject. He not only preached without compensation, and thus obtained a reward which he valued more highly than life, ver. 15, but he also practised self-denial in many other forms, for the advancement of the gospel, and enjoyed a similar reward; namely, "the satisfaction he

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all,

found in imparting the invaluable and inexhaustible blessings of the gospel to all around him."

24. *Know ye not, &c.* What follows is designed to enforce still further the duty and advantage also of self-denial by an appeal to a familiar example of its practice for a less worthy purpose. "The self-denial which he practised for his own sake, like that which he practised for the sake of others, is introduced by a familiar analogy, ushered in by the same phrase, 'Know ye not,' as in ver. 13; the difference being that, as then, when his object was chiefly to impress *his right* on the Jewish converts, the sanction was drawn from Jewish institutions, so here, when his object is chiefly to impress *their duty* on the Gentile converts, the sanction is drawn from Gentile institutions. It is no longer the Temple of Jerusalem with its array of priests and Levites, its golden offerings, and its countless sacrifices, such as he had mentioned in illustration of his right of maintenance; he now refers to the far nearer image of those celebrated festivals, which exercised so great an influence over the Grecian mind, which were, in fact, to their imaginations, what the Temple was to the Jews, and the triumph to the Romans, and of which the most lively instance then to be seen was in the Isthmian games of Corinth."—*Stanley*. The force of the illustration may be easily appreciated and understood, if the purpose for which it was introduced be only remembered, namely, to stimulate his brethren to self-denial for the benefit of themselves and others, by the example of those who did the same for a less-important purpose. ¶ *That they which run in a race.* In the *stadium*, or race-course. This was one of the exercises in the Grecian games. Others were wrestling, boxing, throwing the quoit, and sometimes trials of speed with horses and chariots. In this illustration the apostle mentions only running and boxing. "It must be remembered, in reading the apostle's allusions, that from the national character and religion of the

but one receiveth the prize?
So run, that ye may obtain.

Greeks, these games derived an importance which entirely raised them above the degrading associations with which they would be invested in modern times. — The *stadium* or ‘race-course,’ of which he speaks, was not a mere resort for public amusement, but an almost sacred edifice, under the tutelage of the patron deity of the Ionian tribes, and surrounded by the most solemn recollections of Greece, its white marble seats rising like the foundation of a temple in the grassy slope where its outline may still be traced, under the shadow of the huge Corinthian citadel, which guards the entrance of the Peloponnesus, and overlooking the blue waves of the Saronic gulf, with Athens glittering in the distance. The *race*, ‘in which all run,’ the pugilistic contests, in which they strove not ‘to beat the air,’ were not merely exhibitions of bodily strength, but solemn trials of the excellence of the competitors in the gymnastic art, which was to the Greeks one half of human education; and as the friends and relatives watched with breathless interest the issue of the contest, they knew that the victor would be handed down to posterity, by having his name sung in those triumphal odes, of which Pindar’s are the extant model, and his likeness placed in the long line of statues which formed the approach to the adjacent temple. (Paus. ii. 1,7.) The *prize* which he won from the appointed judges, who sat in state at the end of the course, was such as could awake no mean or mercenary motives; its very simplicity attested its dignity; it was a garland of the Grecian pine, which still, under its classical name, clothes with its light green foliage the plains of the Isthmus, and was then consecrated to the sea-god, around whose temple its groves were gathered.” — Stanley. See also Jahn Arch. § 285, and Robinson’s Calmet, Art. Race. ¶ *Run all, but one receiveth the prize.* This illustration embraces both a parallel and a contrast. The parallel, the self-denial in both cases, is exhibited in the next verse. The contrast is

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate

here implied. In the Grecian games, however many competitors entered the list, only one could obtain the prize; namely, he who excelled all the others; but in the Christian race, all may receive the prize, if they will faithfully perform the conditions. ¶ *So run that ye may obtain.* This is a distinct intimation that the Christian race is not a struggle for pre-eminence, whereby the visitor may receive a prize to the exclusion of all others; but the prize is within the reach of all who conform to the rules of the race, and its bestowment on one does not interfere with its acquisition by all the others. The satisfaction arising from a consciousness of faithfulness and fidelity is a prize which all may attain, who will *so run*, or “so fulfil the law of Christ,” Gal. vi. 2, as to be entitled to it. See note on ver. 23.

25. *And every man that striveth for the mastery.* Literally, every one agonizing. Active and severe exertion is indicated. See note on Luke xiii. 24. In the Grecian games, as is indicated by their character, such as running, wrestling, boxing, and pitching the quoit, the muscles were put to a severe and painful test. ¶ *Is temperate in all things.* Abstains from all indulgences which would have a tendency to enfeeble the body; practises self-denial, in regard even to things lawful, that his muscular vigor may be preserved and increased; avoids everything which might tend to prevent him from obtaining the prize. The main idea is, that such a one cheerfully submits to any and all sacrifices, to all mortification of the appetites and passions, to self-denial in all possible forms, that he may attain the coveted distinction. This example the apostle exhibits to his Christian brethren, as an inducement to practice similar self-denial for a higher purpose. The argument is exhibited in this paraphrase: — “So therefore run your Christian race that ye may obtain the reward of it, and then you will be moved to abstain, as I do, from what may cause your weak brother to fall

in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

and perish; for every man that striveth for the mastery, or is a wrestler in these games, is temperate in all things; that is, observeth a strict abstinence." — *Whitby*. Thus the appeal to the conduct of the competitors of the Grecian games is seen to have a direct bearing on the apostle's main design; to wit, to illustrate his own principle of self-denial, and to persuade his brethren to imitate it. ¶ *Now they do it*. They submit to all this self-denial, this abstinence from even lawful indulgences. ¶ *To obtain a corruptible crown*. A crown which perishes; a chaplet of green leaves, which would soon fade and wither, and crumble in pieces. ¶ *But we an incorruptible*. We seek a more valuable and permanent prize. The testimony of a good conscience before God and man is of far more value than any mere earthly reward; more valuable than the crown of victory bestowed on the Grecian athlete, and all the shouts and acclamations of the applauding thousands who witnessed the contest. What the apostle calls simply his *reward* in ver. 18, which was the foundation of his *glorying*, ver. 15, he here figuratively styles a *crown*, to make the contrast with the Grecian victor's prize more direct and obvious. He elsewhere uses the word in this manner. He addresses his Philippian brethren as "dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown." Phil. iv. 1. To the Thesalonians, having alluded to the fact that he had not been chargeable to them while preaching the gospel, he says, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." 1 Thess. ii. 9, 19, 20. So here, the consciousness that by faithfulness and self-denial, he had been instrumental in the conversion and edification of his brethren at Corinth and elsewhere was his crown of rejoicing, the reward in which he gloried; and it was incorruptible, because it could not be taken from

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

him; whatever good he had done was sure, and he assures his brethren that they may all attain a similar crown by similar faithfulness and self-denial.

26. *I therefore so run*. The reference to the Grecian games is continued. The meaning is, I pursue my course as a Christian and an Apostle. I continue to deny myself in regard to a maintenance, to mortify my appetite by abstaining from meats, to avoid giving offence by becoming all things to all men, in short, to conform in things lawful to the prejudices of others instead of fully using my Christian liberty, in order the more effectually to advance the gospel of Christ. The context indicates this particular characteristic of his *race*. ¶ *Not as uncertainly*. Various interpretations have been given of this phrase. It has been understood to mean, not as uncertain concerning the rules of the race; or concerning the goal to be reached; or concerning the character of the prize; not as running in a hesitating manner, as one who has not determined to strive, or not ambitious to excel; as not running obscurely, or unnoticed, but in full view of spectators and judges. These are truly characteristics of the Christian race; but I doubt whether the apostle here had special reference to either of them. His reference seems rather to the uncertainty which attended the Grecian games, no one knowing beforehand whether success were possible. "In the foot-course in those games, how many soever ran, only one could have the prize, however strenuously they might exert themselves; therefore all ran uncertainly; but it was widely different in the Christian course; if every one ran as he ought, each would receive the prize." — *Clarke*. The certainty that every sincere desire and effort to promote the success of the gospel and the welfare of men shall receive its proper reward, is an encouragement to perseverance in well-doing; and to this I suppose the apostle here refers. ¶ *So*

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means,

fight I. The figure is here changed from *running* to *boxing*, as practised at the Grecian games. ¶ *Not as one that beateth the air.* Not like those who, before the actual combat, practise the motions in order to acquire skill and dexterity; not like those who, in actual combat, strike wide of the mark and fail to hit their antagonist. Both these waste their strength in beating the air; they strike no substantial object.

27. *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.* "After having shown how he does *not*, the apostle shows how he *does* fight. The first term properly signifies to strike under the eye; and as that is especially severe to an adversary, it thus came to denote 'to treat harshly,' so as to subdue any one's spirit. The next term goes still further, and signifies 'to gain the complete mastery over.' Hence both terms denote figuratively to mortify the body, by bringing its appetites into complete subjection."—*Bloomfield.* "In either case, the thing meant is his self-denial, as shown chiefly through the refusal to receive a maintenance, and thereby being compelled to work with his own hands."—*Stanley.* This was truly shown in this instance; but in others also, which are enumerated in this discourse. The general struggle of the spirit with the flesh is described in Rom. ch. vii.; but the special reference here is to the victory which Paul had obtained in subjecting his own convenience to the welfare of others, as declared in ch. viii. 13, and illustrated by other examples in this chapter. ¶ *Lest that by any means.* An intimation is here given that the fruits of victory might be lost, by a relaxation of effort. He had gained the prize, and gloried in it; yet his glorying would become void, if he ceased to be worthy of it, ver. 15-18. ¶ *When I have preached to others.* Some suppose the reference to the games is still continued, and that Paul here compares himself to the *herald*, who called the combatants to the

when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a castaway.

struggle. But the better opinion is, that the metaphor is dropped, and that the word is to be taken in its usual sense of preaching. He had preached through this whole chapter, as well as elsewhere, the duty of self-denial for the general good. He had enforced the duty, by an appeal to his own example; and for the encouragement of his brethren, he had described the prize of victory, which he had received, and which awaited them if they would in like manner bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please themselves, Rom. xv. 1; in other words, if they also would practise self-denial. ¶ *I myself should be a cast-away.* Or he disapproved, or become unworthy. "I myself should be one not approved."—*Macknight.* The word here used is taken from the assay of metals and denotes the rejection or disapproval of such as will not abide the proper tests. The apostle thus declares his intention to persevere in the course which he had hitherto pursued, lest he should become unworthy of the rich satisfaction he now enjoyed, and his glorying should become void, ver. 15. "Let us then so far follow their example; suffering many inconveniences, that we may procure happiness to others, and secure it to ourselves."—*Gilpin.* "I macerate myself, and bring myself under, by denying myself those indifferent liberties which I might enjoy, lest having prescribed to others the way of striving and getting the victory and the crown, I myself should miscarry and miss of it."—*Hammond.* "The apostle's concern is, lest he should do anything which might bring a reproach on the gospel, lest some corruption of his nature or other should break out, and thereby his ministry be justly blamed, and he brought under contempt, and so he be rejected and disapproved of by men, and become useless as a preacher; not that he feared he should become a reprobate; as the word is opposed to an elect person, or that he should be a cast-away

CHAPTER X.

MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye should

eternally, or be everlastingly damned; for he knew in whom he had believed, &c."—*Gill*. I have quoted the foregoing authorities, because ver. 24–27 have so generally been interpreted as descriptive of a struggle for final salvation, and the danger of failing to obtain it. Such an interpretation is wholly inconsistent with the general scope of the apostle's argument. From the beginning of ch. viii. to the end of ch. x., a single subject is steadily pursued; namely, the duty of self-denial generally, and especially in regard to "the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols," ch. viii. 4, in order to "give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God," ch. x. 32. This duty the apostle enforces, in this chapter and the next, by an appeal to his own example, citing various instances of his self-denial, and closes his argument by a similar appeal:—"even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved," ch. x. 33. He not only urged the duty, but he declared that its performance was attended by an abundant reward, which he had already received, ver. 18, and which was within their reach, ver. 24; which he valued more highly than life, ver. 15, and against the loss of which he guarded, by maintaining a constant control over himself, ver. 27. To suppose that, in these verses, he represents final salvation as a prize to be gained by human exertion, is not only inconsistent with the doctrine of salvation as elsewhere taught by him, but inconsistent also with the general scope of his argument, and implies the introduction of a new subject, entirely foreign to that which is under discussion.

CHAPTER X.

Some commentators have supposed that this chapter has no immediate connection with the preceding, and have regarded it as a digression, or

be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto

the discussion of an independent subject. Others admit a connection, but differ as to the connecting link. I have already stated my opinion that the three chapters, viii., ix., x., are a continuous discussion of one subject. In this opinion a judicious writer concurs:—"I regard this chapter as having a very close connection with ch. viii. In the close of ch. viii. (ver. 13), Paul had stated, when examining the question whether it was right to eat meat offered in sacrifice to idols, that the grand principle on which he acted, and on which they should act, was that of self-denial. To illustrate this, he employs the ninth chapter, by showing how he acted on it in reference to a maintenance; showing that it was this principle that led him to decline a support to which he was really entitled. Having illustrated that, he returns in this chapter to the subject which he was discussing in ch. viii.; and the design of this chapter is further to explain and enforce the sentiments advanced there, and to settle some other inquiries pertaining to the same general subject."—*Barnes*. It may be properly added here, that the discussion in this chapter presents the subject in still another point of view besides that in which it was placed in ch. viii. There, the apostle represented self-denial as a duty towards others; and the same view is again given in ver. 23–33. Here he represents it as a duty which Christians owe to themselves, ver. 1–22. There they were exhorted to practice self-denial, that they might not injure others; here, lest they should injure themselves.

1. *Moreover, brethren*. This form of expression indicates that an additional consideration is about to be urged. It has been supposed, and not without reason, that the Corinthians in their letter to Paul, ch. vii. 1, had represented that they were under strong inducements to accept the invitation of their friends to idolatrous feasts. Not only would they thus

Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

gratify their bodily appetites, which are sometimes clamorous for indulgence, but it was a matter of courtesy necessary to the preservation of friendship and good-fellowship; and ver. 13 contains an intimation that compliance was considered necessary, in order to avoid persecution. They are supposed also, to have represented that there could be no danger in such compliances; that they had been baptized into the Christian faith, they had partaken of the Lord's supper, they had all knowledge and well knew that an idol was nothing in the world, ch. viii. 1, 4, and therefore there could be no danger of harm to themselves; and that God had so highly favored them with spiritual gifts, that they were surely safe from pollution in the idol's house. To this the apostle replies by sundry arguments, the first of which is drawn from Jewish history. ¶ *I would not that ye should be ignorant.* I would have you know and consider. He calls their attention to the case of some who had fallen under like circumstances. ¶ *How that all our fathers.* "That is our predecessors in the church of God. For the Corinthian church being chiefly composed of Gentiles, the Israelites could not be called their natural fathers. Or the apostle's meaning may be, the fathers of us Jews." — *Macknight.* "Our fathers is remarkable as addressed to readers, many of whom were Gentiles. But, as he has been speaking of himself just before, he naturally passes to the thought of the Israelites as his own ancestors; and it is but one out of many instances of the Jewish character of even the Gentile churches, from the fact that so many of their number had already been Jewish proselytes." — *Stanley.* For whatever reason the apostle may have adopted this form of speech, its reference to the ancient Jews is unmistakable. ¶ *Were under the cloud.* The visible token of God's presence, a pillar of fire by night, and of cloud by day, which accompanied the Israelites during their pilgrimage through the

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

desert. Ex. xiii. 21, 22; xiv. 19, 20. Sometimes this cloud overshadowed them; Num. x. 34; xiv. 14; and to this peculiarity the apostle seems to refer. ¶ *And all passed through the sea.* The Red Sea, which by the wonderful power of God, was parted, that they might pass through dry-shod, and closed again upon Pharaoh and his host, overwhelming them in destruction. Ex. xiv. 21–31.

2. *And were all baptized unto Moses, &c.* This need not be pressed so far, as to suppose that they were sprinkled with water from the cloud or from the sea; much less need we suppose the rite, as afterwards practised, was administered with formal ceremonies. "Almost all commentators from the time of Hammond downwards take the sense to be:—were, by passing under the cloud (yielding themselves to its guidance) and through the sea, as it were baptized or initiated into the religion promulgated by Moses; and thus thoroughly recognized his divine mission, and bound themselves in future to obey his laws. For baptism, say they, was a symbolical rite, by which any one bound himself unto faith and obedience to any teacher of religion, and the baptism itself was a form of initiation into that religion." — *Bloomfield.* I suppose the apostle intended here by *baptism*, no more than is expressed in the original record; namely, that the Jews were convinced by these miracles that Moses was their divinely-appointed leader and spiritual guide. "And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses." Ex. xiv. 31.

3. *And did all eat the same spiritual meat.* Called spiritual, on account of its miraculous bestowment. It was not produced according to the common course of nature, but by the interposition of the divine spirit. The reference is plainly to the manna where-with God fed the Israelites during their forty years' wanderings in the

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that fol-

wilderness. Ex. xvi. 11-15, 35. It is called *meat* in the translation, agreeably to the ancient use of the word, to signify food of any kind.

4. *And did all drink the same spiritual drink.* The water, namely, that gushed from the rock when Moses smote it by divine command. Ex. xvii. 6. It is called spiritual, because, whether or not it was a natural fountain in the rock, it was brought forth for their use in a miraculous manner. It was supernaturally bestowed, even if naturally produced. ¶ *For they drank of that spiritual rock.* That is, of the water which flowed from the rock. ¶ *That followed them.* Not the rock, but the water that flowed from it, followed them. The language cannot be understood literally, without absurdity, and we must therefore interpret it rationally, unless we would reject it entirely. It is supposed that the water continued to flow from the rock, like an ordinary spring, in such quantity as to form a stream which gradually found its way to the Red Sea. It was natural that the Israelites should keep near it for the sake of refreshment. And, as matter of fact, they are found, thirty-seven years afterwards, at Ezion-geber, on a branch of the Red Sea, at a point to which travellers tell us water would naturally flow from Mount Horeb. ¶ *And that rock was Christ.* Represented Christ. See note on Matt. xxvi. 26. Paul does not specify the particulars in which the rock resembled Christ, or was typical of him. Perhaps the most obvious and general resemblance is, that as the rock gave forth a supply of water sufficient for the whole multitude, fully adequate to their wants both in quantity and in duration, so is Christ the fountain of spiritual blessings, equally abundant and equally durable. But this subject need not be further discussed here. The design of this and the foregoing verses seems to be, to caution the Corinthians against an undue self-confidence. The key-

lowed them: and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with many of them

note is found in ver. 12. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." They were "puffed up" with their actual or imagined privileges. They had been "called to be saints"; they had been richly endowed with spiritual gifts; they had all knowledge; they were sure that they were the chosen of God. What harm could result, if they visited the idol's temple, and ate meats offered in sacrifice? Why might they not safely gratify their appetite, enjoy convivial intercourse with their friends, and avoid persecution by their enemies, by thus partaking of idolatrous feasts? They knew that an idol was nothing; what harm could befall them in his temple? To abate their spiritual pride, and to inspire humility and circumspection, the apostle cites the example of those who had fallen when enjoying similar privileges and advantages. The Jews, he tells them, were delivered from bondage and made acquainted with the true God by miracle; they were instructed by his inspired servant; their wants were supplied in such a manner that they were perpetually reminded of the divine goodness, — for the miraculous stream continued to flow through the desert, and the bread from heaven came down day by day. All these were evidences of the divine favor, and indicated them as a peculiar people. Yet, as he shows in the following verses, when they abused their privileges and followed the promptings of their own appetites and passions instead of carefully obeying the law, they fell; and as they fell, so others might.

5. *But with many of them God was not well pleased.* He did not approve their conduct. He had abundantly blessed them, and given them valuable instructions, but they were ungrateful and disobedient. The phrase translated "many of them," literally indicates "most of them," the larger part of the whole. Indeed, only *two* of the vast multitude which came out

God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

of Egypt were permitted to enter Canaan; but those who were guilty of the gross sins mentioned in ver. 6-10, and were destroyed in an extraordinary manner, are here specially referred to. ¶ *For they were overthrown in the wilderness.* Some died by natural disease, and others in the extraordinary manner afterwards related.

6. *Now these things were our examples.* Literally, types; specimens of the divine administration, exhibiting the great truth that God judgeth in the earth, Ps. lviii. 11; that high station or exalted privileges can exempt no one from a righteous retribution; that nations and communities, as well as individuals, are responsible to the divine law; and that extraordinary privileges involve extraordinary responsibilities, instead of furnishing any excuse for unrighteousness. See note on Matt. xi. 21-24. ¶ *To the intent that we should not lust after evil things, &c.* These examples warn us against such lusting. "Evil things" here denotes things forbidden and therefore injurious; the things might be lawful and proper in themselves, but improper and hurtful under peculiar circumstances, as in the case cited. ¶ *As they also lusted.* The reference is to the lusting of the Israelites for flesh. Numb. ch. xi. They grew weary of the manna, and sighed for the flesh-pots of Egypt. It pleased God, as not unfrequently occurs, to punish them by granting the full gratification of their desires. He sent an abundance of quails, and they ate so voraciously that sudden disease and death followed; they were smitten "with a very great plague." This example was well chosen as a warning to the Corinthians, whose special craving at that time was for meats offered unto idols.

7. *Neither be ye idolaters.* The

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them com-

caution is repeated, and the danger that participation in idolatrous feasts might occasion them to relapse into idolatry, is illustrated in ver. 14-21. ¶ *As were some of them.* See Ex. ch. xxxii. In the absence of Moses, the people persuaded Aaron to make them gods who should go before them. He made a calf of molten gold, and they worshipped it; wherefore "the Lord plagued the people." ¶ *As it is written.* Ex. xxxii. 6. ¶ *The people sat down to eat and drink.* It has been heretofore observed that a portion of idolatrous worship consisted in eating and drinking in honor of the idol; and the entertainment generally consisted of things offered in sacrifice. This example, also, was peculiarly applicable to the case of the Corinthians, who desired to participate in similar feasts. ¶ *And rose up to play.* Some commentators suppose that "to play," indicates licentious acts. That such acts were common, and sometimes required, in connection with idolatrous worship, is unquestionable; but it is not necessarily implied here. The original word may better be understood in "a general signification, including leaping, dancing, singing, and all other kinds of festal enjoyment." — *Bloomfield.* The account given by Moses distinctly specifies shouting, singing, and dancing, as practised when the people "rose up to play"; Ex. xxxii. 17-19; but it does not mention acts of gross licentiousness.

8. *Neither let us commit fornication, &c.* This admonition is naturally connected with the subject of idolatry, inasmuch as many of the idolatrous rites were of a licentious character. The warning was the more necessary because Corinth was notorious throughout the world as the hot-bed of this vice, and the brethren there were peculiarly exposed to it. The case to

mitted, and fell in one day
three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ,

which the apostle refers is recorded in Numb. xxv. 1-3. The Israelites, being enticed, not only "bowed down" to false gods, but "committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab." ¶ *And fell in one day.* Died by the plague which was sent upon them for their iniquity. ¶ *Three and twenty thousand.* Moses says, "twenty and four thousand." Numb. xxv. 9. Some account for the discrepancy of numbers by supposing the actual number to be between the two, and accurately enough expressed either way. Others suppose twenty-three thousand were destroyed by the plague, and another thousand slain agreeably to the order of Moses. Numb. xxv. 5. It is sufficient that Paul did not overstate the number; and that the number as stated by him is sufficiently large to justify his use of the event as an illustration of his subject.

9. *Neither let us tempt Christ.* To tempt often means to incite or solicit to an evil act, by presenting plausible arguments, or offering some alluring inducement. But when used as in this place, the definition by *Cruden* applies. "Men are said to tempt the Lord, (1.) when they unreasonably require of him sensible proofs of his divine presence, of his power, or of his goodness: — (2.) when men expose themselves to such dangers, from which they cannot escape but by the miraculous interposition of his providence: — (3.) when men set themselves to commit sin so impudently as if they did it on purpose to try whether God was just or powerful enough to punish them for it." Against what peculiar form of temptation the apostle here warns his brethren, does not distinctly appear. The general subject under discussion, however, renders it probable that he intended to caution them especially against frequenting the idol temples. They thought they were sufficiently strong to avoid the temptation to relapse into idolatry, but he assured

as some of them also tempted,
and were destroyed of serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as

them that the practice was dangerous; and he exhorted them to deny themselves by abstaining from such feasts, rather than by using their Christian liberty to its utmost extent to expose themselves to temptation which might require higher power than their own to enable them to resist. ¶ *As some of them also tempted.* That is, tempted God, as is manifest from the place referred to. "The people spake against God and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died." Numb. xxi. 5, 6.

10. *Neither murmur ye.* Repine not at the dispensations of Providence. ¶ *As some of them also murmured, &c.* No distinct reference is here made to any particular instance of murmuring; but it was characteristic of the Israelites for a long time after they left Egypt, and the reference may have been general. A noticeable instance, however, is recorded in Numb. xiv. 1-4. They lost confidence in their leaders, repined in their trials, were impatient under affliction, and proposed to elect a new captain and to return into Egypt. ¶ *And were destroyed of the destroyer.* "The destroying angel, mentioned at Ex. xii. 23; Heb. xi. 28, and often in the Old Testament, under the name of the 'angel of death.' There is here a reference to Numb. xiv., and other parts of the Old Testament. This verse seems to be in some measure exegetical of the former." — *Bloomfield.* It may be doubted, however, whether "the destroyer" here indicates any special intelligent agent of destruction, or even any particular manner of death. In the place already referred to, because they had thus murmured, it is written, "I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation that are gath-

some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensam-

ered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die." Numb. xiv. 35. Such was the general doom of the murmurers, and it was fully executed. Various agencies, however, were employed in its execution. Some were destroyed by the plague, ver. 8; some by serpents, ver. 9; some by the sword, and some, doubtless, by ordinary disease, and by the decay of old age. The simple idea is, that those who murmured should therefore die in the wilderness; and they did thus die.

11. *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples.* See note on ver. 6. "The sense is, not that these things took place simply and solely to be examples or admonitions, but that their occurrence illustrated great principles of human nature and of the divine government; they showed the weakness of men, and their liability to fall into sin, and their need of the divine protection; and they might thus be used for the admonition of succeeding generations." — *Barnes*. ¶ *And they are written for our admonition.* Namely, in the Old Testament, or in the Books of Moses, to which all the special references are made. The chief service of history, sacred or profane, is to afford instruction by the example of previous generations. By contemplating the results of human actions, we are prompted to imitate the judicious and avoid the foolish; to imitate the good and abstain from the vicious; remembering always that the same righteous Ruler still presides over the universe, and now, even as heretofore, "will render to every man according to his deeds." See note on Rom. ii. 6. With this view, and for this purpose, Paul quoted these examples for the admonition of his brethren. ¶ *Upon whom the ends of the world are come.* Rather, the ends of the ages. The word here used is *αἰώνων*, indicating time, not *κόσμου*,

ples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that

which indicates the material world or its inhabitants. See note on Matt. xxiv. 3. "It has been fully established by the researches of the most eminent commentators, (as Grotius, Crellius, Lightfoot, Schoetgen, Wolf, Pearce, Whitby, Rosenmüller, Pott, and Heydenreich,) that this does *not* mean, as is commonly supposed, 'the ends of the world'; but that there is an allusion to the Jewish mode of computing the duration of the world, and distributing it into three *æons*, or periods of two thousand years each: (1.) the age before the law; (2.) that of the Mosaic dispensation; (3.) that of the Messiah. Thus the sense will be, 'upon whom the end of the æons, or ages, that is, the last æon, or age, is come,' namely, the age of the Messiah, the last dispensation of God to man." — *Bloomfield*. "This may mean the end of the Mosaic dispensation, whose duration was measured by ages or jubilees. Or it may signify the last dispensation of religion. For there was the patriarchal age or dispensation, the Mosaic age, and the gospel age." — *Macknight*.

12. *Wherefore.* As the conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing examples. Let this lesson be impressed on your minds, by the consideration of God's dealings with his ancient people. ¶ *Let him that thinketh he standeth.* That feels himself to be wise, and strong, and virtuous; that considers himself able to stand by his own strength, and above the reach of deception and temptation. ¶ *Take heed lest he fall.* The general idea is, lest he commit sin. The special reference is to the danger to which the Corinthians were exposed, of falling into idolatry with all its kindred vices, as the result of participating in idolatrous feasts; for this is the general drift of the whole argument. They were puffed up with knowledge and gifts; they knew that an idol was

thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation

nothing, and considered themselves proof against temptation. By the example of others, who enjoyed and abused peculiar privileges, the apostle admonishes them to beware of self-conceit and self-confidence; for however firmly they may appear to stand, there is danger of falling. This danger he afterwards more fully explains. "Therefore, with these warnings before us, let no one be so proud of his Christian privileges, of his knowledge, of his liberty, of his gifts, of his communion with Christ, as to think that he is above the danger of falling. Compare the other indications of the pride and over-conscientiousness of superiority in the Corinthian church, ch. i. 12; iv. 8; xiv. 36."—*Stanley*. But although the admonition had this special purpose and application, it is general in its nature, and is of the utmost importance to every Christian. Self-confidence has been a fruitful source of evil to men. Confident in their ability to resist temptation, they have ventured on rash experiments, until, in an unexpected hour, they have fallen prostrate before it, and lost fortune, health, reputation, and, more than all, the approbation of a good conscience. An encouragement to watchfulness against temptation, and an assurance of adequate aid to the faithful, are added in the next verse.

13. *There hath no temptation taken you, &c.* No irresistible temptation hath yet assailed you. You have not yet been brought under the power or influence of any temptation beyond endurance. While the language is general, and embraces a general truth, yet it is probable that the apostle specially refers to the particular danger under discussion, namely, that the Corinthians were liable to relapse into idolatry by a free participation in idolatrous feasts, and by partaking of things offered to idols. The temptations which beset them in this respect were various: the gratification of their appetites; their love of excite-

taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to

ment and good fellowship; their desire to live on terms of courtesy and friendship; all these tempted them to accept invitations to visit the idol's temple. Moreover, it is supposed that persecution was beginning to be felt; and that Christians were tempted to avoid it by compliances in outward forms, which might be considered by the heathen as acts of idolatrous worship, but not so regarded by themselves. "What the precise temptation alluded to was, it is difficult to determine. But this warning against idolatry, immediately following, seems to point to the general subject of the whole passage, namely, their idol feasts. You are, indeed, in great difficulties; all the grandeur, all the beauty, all the festivity of heathen life are around you to tempt you to fall into the same sins as those which overcame the Israelites; but still, by all the motives which I have laid before you, I conjure you by the love which I bear to you, not merely to avoid the idol feasts for the sake of others, but to fly from them yourselves; for to partake of them is in fact to partake of an idolatrous rite."—*Stanley*. "And though some motives there are now among you that may tempt you to join with the heathen in their idolatries, to wit, the persecution of the heathen among which you live," &c. — *Hammond*. It is almost superfluous to add the very obvious remark, that many Christians in more recent days have had the like temptation to have an ostensible fellowship with doctrines which they do not believe, in order to retain the friendship or avoid the ill-will of others. ¶ *But such as is common to man.* Such as is suited to human nature; such as others have felt and have resisted. "No trial has come upon you beyond man's power to bear."—*Conybear*. "These temptations are not, as they are sometimes alleged to be, above human strength; are no more than human nature is made liable to, and may be enabled to

be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

bear." — *Bloomfield*. This is stated as an encouragement to watchfulness. Though the Corinthians were in danger of falling, they were able to stand, by the divine blessing on their honest and steady resistance to temptation. ¶ *But God is faithful*. In his previous argument, Paul taught his brethren that God is unchangeably just; as he punished his ancient people for their iniquities, so would he punish them, if they sinned in like manner. He now assures them that God is faithful; as he has given them strength hitherto, and has always blessed the earnest efforts of the well-disposed, they may confidently trust in his future aid and protection. This encouragement, as appears from what follows, is designed to inspire confidence in God's mercy for deliverance from trials yet to come. ¶ *Who will not suffer you to be tempted, &c.* Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond your capacity of resistance. There is a limit to human endurance, because man is not infinite. To be overcome by a temptation beyond that limit, or by an irresistible temptation, would not involve sin. God will not subject his children to any such temptation. ¶ *Make a way to escape*. In every season of temptation, he will grant all necessary aid to them who seek it. Strength shall be given for successful resistance, if men will resolutely resist. A way of escape shall always be open; and though it may not at first be visible, it shall in due time become clear to all who faithfully use their own exertions and look steadfastly for divine assistance. ¶ *That ye may be able to bear it*. That you may not be discouraged; that you may not sink under it. The trial may seem insupportable; yet if you confidently trust in God for deliverance, you can endure it while it continues, and ultimately triumph over it. The general idea in this whole verse is this: In exhorting you to *stand*, to hold fast faith and a good

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.

conscience, I require nothing impracticable; your temptations are not irresistible, and they never will be, for God, who is faithful, will sustain you in all trials, so long as you are true to yourselves. This assurance is not inconsistent with Paul's acknowledgment in Rom. ch. vii., that absolutely perfect holiness is impossible to men who yet dwell in the flesh; for while he promises divine assistance to every earnest effort, he distinctly intimates that, because of human imperfection, there is constant danger of a relaxation of effort and of consequent *falling* before the power of temptation.

14. *Wherefore*. Both because there is danger, and because you have power, or shall have assistance, to avoid it. ¶ *Flee from idolatry*. Avoid all approaches to it. Expose yourselves to nothing which might possibly lead to it. Go not to idolatrous feasts. Join not in idolatrous ceremonies. Whatever you may think of an idol, go not into the way of temptation. This is the point to which the previous argument is directed, and which is illustrated in what follows. There was danger both to others and to themselves, in their attendance upon idolatrous feasts; to others, who might thus be led astray; and to themselves, as they might be induced actually to relapse into idolatry.

15. *I speak as to wise men, &c.* "An expression meant to soften the harshness of what he may have to say. The apostle addresses them as persons of wisdom and judgment, because they valued themselves on their superior knowledge, and in order that he might make his appeals to their reason and conscience more effectual." — *Bloomfield*. There may be a slight tinge of irony here, with an intimation that if they were really as wise as they professed to be, they ought already to know what he was about to prove.

16. *The cup of blessing*. The sacramental cup, so called, because, in

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

17 For we *being* many are

partaking of it, Christians blessed God, or gave thanks. "The cup of blessing. So was that cup in the Passover called, over which thanks were given after meat, and in which our Saviour instituted the cup of the eucharist. When, therefore, the apostle marks out the cup of the Lord's supper with the same name as the Jews did their cup, he hath recourse to the first institution of it, and implies that giving of thanks was continued over it by Christians, although now under another notion." — *Lightfoot*. Some understand the phrase to mean simply "the blessed cup," according to a familiar Jewish idiom. ¶ *Which we bless*. Over which we bless God, as some say; or rather, as others suppose, which we set apart to a sacred use. ¶ *Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?* Not the cup itself, but the participation in its contents, is styled the communion of the blood of Christ; it is an act declarative of a belief that we are joint partakers in its benefits. See note on Matt. xxvi. 28. ¶ *The bread which we break, &c.* The sacramental bread. "This account of the Lord's supper the apostle gave to show the Corinthians, that, as by eating thereof, the partakers declare they have the same object of worship, the same faith, the same hope, and the same dispositions, with the persons whom they join in that act of religion, and that they will follow the same course of life; so, in all reasonable construction, by eating the sacrifices of idols, the partakers declare that they are of the same faith and practice with the worshippers of idols; that they have the same objects of worship with them; and that they expect to share with them in the benefits to be derived from that worship." — *Macknight*.

17. For we *being* many are one bread,

one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

and one body. It is supposed that there is here an allusion to the fact that the one loaf was composed of many particles of flour, and that the apostle intended to say that *in like manner* those who partook of it, though many individuals, constituted but one body. The idea manifestly is, that those who partook of the Lord's supper thereby acknowledged themselves to be one brotherhood, animated by the same hopes, and under the same obligations; one body, of which Christ is the head. In a very important sense, "the head of every man is Christ," ch. xi. 3, and all shall finally be gathered together in him; Eph. i. 10; but the reference here is to those who actually joined in the communion service. ¶ *For we are all partakers of that one bread*. We thus publicly acknowledge our relationship to him and to each other. The partaking of the bread does not *make* the relationship; but it is a manifestation of it. For the application of this fact to the argument, see ver. 20, and note on ver. 16.

18. *Behold Israel after the flesh*. The Jews, the natural descendants of Israel or Jacob. Paul distinguishes between this natural Israel, and that spiritual Israel, consisting of Christians of all nations and kindreds, whom he styles the "Israel of God," Gal. vi. 16. He urges the same argument in regard to their acts of sacrificial worship as in regard to the Christian communion service. ¶ *Are not they which eat of the sacrifices*. In the public worship of God, various sacrifices were offered. In some cases, the whole was consumed on the altar; but, generally, a part was thus consumed, a part was eaten by the priests, and a part eaten by those who presented the offering for sacrifice; and particular portions were assigned

19 What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything?

for each use. See Lev. ch. vii. Deut. xi. 13-19. ¶ *Partakers of the altar.* "Worshippers of the same God. They are united in their worship, and are so regarded." — *Barnes.* "They who eat of the sacrifice are partakers of God's table, the altar, have fellowship with him, and share in the benefit of the sacrifice as if it were offered for them." — *Locke.* See ver. 20.

19. *What say I then? That the idol is anything?* Paul had expressed his opinion in ch. viii. 4, that "an idol is nothing in the world." But his argument here is, that participation in idolatrous feasts is not only of evil tendency to others, but dangerous to the individual. He anticipates an objection likely to arise, as if he now admitted what he before denied. What follows from my argument? Must I therefore be understood to say that an idol is anything? that there is any real existence represented by the heathen images? The answer follows in the next verse. ¶ *Or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything.* That it has acquired any peculiar quality in consequence of having been offered in sacrifice? that it is thereby rendered intrinsically unclean? that it is anything, indeed, more or less than it was before?

20. *But I say.* Equivalent to no; but I say this. I do not affirm that the idol or the sacrifice is anything; but I say this, which follows. "What is my meaning? That an idol is anything; that is, has any divinity? or, that the idol-meat is anything; that is, differs from other meats? No; this is not my meaning:—but my meaning is, that, &c. This ellipsis of the negative after an interrogation is occasionally found, both in the scriptural and classical writers." — *Bloomfield.* The apostle's argument runs thus:—I do not say that an idol, or the sacrifice, is anything; but I say that, although you and I know that an idol is nothing, the Gentiles have

20 *But I say,* that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not

not this knowledge, but verily believe that idols are existing realities, demons; and with this belief, they offer sacrifices. If you join them in their ceremonies, they will understand you to agree with them in belief, and to unite with them in worship; indeed, you will be in danger, from the force of habit and association, of actually relapsing into idolatry. ¶ *They sacrifice to devils, and not to God.* They do not sacrifice to God, whom alone you should worship; they do sacrifice to devils, whom you should not worship. In either view of this subject, you ought not to have such visible communion with them. The word used here is not *δαιμόλιος*, *devil*, but *δαιμονίους*, *to demons.* "The word *δαιμόνια*, *demons*, is used in the LXX. to denote *the ghosts of men deceased*; and Josephus, *Bell.*, vii. 6, says, 'demons are the spirits of wicked men.' It is therefore probable, that the writers in the New Testament used the word *demon* in the same sense, especially as it is well known that the greatest part of the heathen gods were dead men. The heathens worshipped two kinds of demons; the one kind were the souls of kings and heroes, deified after death, but who could have no agency in human affairs; the other kind of demons were those evil spirits, who, under the names of Jupiter, Apollo, Trophonius, &c., moving the heathen priests and priestesses to deliver oracles, greatly promoted idolatry." — *Macknight.* "The sentiment itself expressed by our translators, that the Gentiles sacrifice to devils, is not just, whether we consider the thing abstractly, or in relation to the intention of the worshippers. Considered abstractly, the pagan worship and sacrifices were not offered to God, whom they knew not, and to whose character and attributes there was nothing in the popular creed (I speak not of philosophers) that bore the least affinity. But as little were they offered to that being whom Christians

that ye should have fellowship with devils.

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers

and Jews call the devil or satan, with whose character they were equally unacquainted. Nor is it enough to say that the character of their deities was so bad that they partook more of the diabolical nature than the divine. For this does not hold universally. Pagan nations sometimes deified men who had been their benefactors. Osiris is said to have invented the plough, and to have been the first who taught the Egyptians husbandry. Though not on that account entitled to adoration, yet surely not deserving to be looked on as the devil or enemy of mankind. — Now, in regard to idols, the apostle had said in the same epistle, that an idol is nothing in the world; in other words, is the representation of no real existence in the universe, though it may be the representation of an imaginary being. It is as much as to say, Jupiter, and Juno, and Saturn, and all the rest of the heathen gods, as delineated by the poets and mythologists, are non-entities, the mere creatures of the imagination." — *Campbell*, Diss. vi. 14, 15. ¶ *I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Or demons, as before.* I would not have you express a belief in their existence, or admiration for their supposed character, or thankfulness for their supposed gifts and benefits, or confidence in them for future blessings, or be in any manner apparent worshippers of them, as you will seem to do if you join in the idolatrous feasts. Especially would I not have you imbibe the spirit they are supposed to possess, or return to a belief in their actual existence, as you will be in danger of doing, if you frequent their houses and associate with their worshippers in idolatrous ceremonies. As Christians acknowledge themselves disciples of Christ by jointly partaking the Lord's supper, ver. 16, 17, and as the Jews acknowledge themselves the people of God, by

of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

offering the sacrifices prescribed by the law, ver. 18, so will you be regarded by the world as idolators, whether you actually become such or not, if you have communion in things offered to idols. Thus will the gospel of Christ be hindered, and his faithful disciples grieved.

21. *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils.* Ye cannot consistently and honestly join in acts of worship which recognize only one true God, and in those which recognize gods many and lords many. The reference here is not to a natural, but to a moral impossibility, similar to that of which our Lord speaks: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. vi. 24. See note on ver. 20. ¶ *Ye cannot be partakers, &c.* The same idea is substantially repeated; the "bread" broken in the name of Christ, and the "cup of blessing," ver. 16, being placed in opposition to the meats and drinks used in idolatrous feasts.

22. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?* Shall we wilfully disobey God, and expose ourselves to a righteous retribution? "This is an allusion to Ex. xx. 5, where, after prohibiting the worshipping of images, God adds, 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.'" — *Macknight*. Jealousy is here attributed to God, like anger, wrath, vengeance, and indignation, elsewhere, in a figurative sense, and is by no means to be understood literally, as if he were "altogether such a one as" ourselves, Ps. 1. 21, and subject to human passions and infirmities. The idea is simply, if we disobey him, we must suffer the consequences; if we disobey wilfully, we seem to challenge his retributive justice. See note on Rom. i. 18. ¶ *Are we stronger than he?* A denial in the form of interrogation. As we cannot resist his will, it is folly to hope for escape from "a just recompense of reward." Heb. ii. 2.

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*.

23. *All things are lawful for me.* See note on ch. vi. 12. That is, as the context implies, all *meats* may be lawfully eaten. No meat is "unclean of itself." Rom. xiv. 14. And I may lawfully eat any meat, in any place, without detriment to my own conscience, if I eat in faith and give all the glory to the true God. But, as follows in the succeeding words, I am willing to deny myself in regard to this, as well as in regard to many other rights, because its full exercise might be injurious to others. ¶ *But all things are not expedient.* The apostle has clearly shown the inexpediency of eating in the idol's temple; it would be offensive to the weak, and might cause them to stumble, ch. viii. 7-12; and in thus eating, one not only scandalized the church, but was himself exposed to great danger, ver. 20. It is lawful for a man to walk on the edge of a precipice, and he may escape without harm; but it is not expedient, lest he become giddy, and lose his balance, and plunge into destruction, ver. 12. ¶ *All things edify not.* "All things do not tend to build up the church, and to advance the interests of religion; and when they do not have this effect, they are not expedient, and are improper."—*Barnes.* In this and the two preceding chapters, the apostle has enforced, by his own example, the duty of Christians to practise self-denial, and to forego the exercise of lawful rights, so far as it may be done without a sacrifice of moral principle, for the general advantage of the brethren. And this is the duty here inculcated. It may be lawful to eat meat in the idol's temple; but it does not edify the church; and it should therefore be avoided.

24. *Let no man seek his own.* This holds true as a general rule, that no one ought to be guided solely by selfish considerations; but it is here used with special application to the subject

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, *that* eat, asking no question for conscience' sake.

26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

under consideration. In regard to meats offered unto idols, let no man be governed entirely by his own desires and inclinations, nor by his opinion concerning his own rights and the abstract lawfulness of certain acts. But let him rather consult the welfare of others as well as his own. He may refrain from eating such meats without defiling his own conscience. It is not certain that he can partake of them without injury to others. ¶ *But every man another's wealth.* *Wealth* is here supplied by our translators, to complete the sentence. *Welfare* would be a better word. Moral and spiritual advantage is indicated, rather than the accumulation of temporal goods. Personal self-denial, for the sake of general growth in grace and the spiritual good of the brethren, is the great duty here urged by the apostle.

25. *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles.* Or, in the market. See note on Rom. xiv. 2. Some were scrupulous about such meats, lest by mistake they should eat what had been offered to idols. The Gentiles generally had no such scruples; neither had Paul. ¶ *That eat, asking no questions for conscience' sake.* The meat was none the less fit to be eaten because it had been offered in sacrifice, and Christians had no reasonable cause to abstain from it, or to inquire whether it came from an idol's temple or elsewhere. It was wholly immaterial whether the meat had been previously offered in sacrifice; if it were wholesome and nutritious, it might be eaten lawfully and properly.

26. *For the earth is the Lord's, &c.* Quoted from Ps. xxiv. 1. All that is produced from the earth, whether vegetable or animal, is of the Lord; and whatever is fit for food he hath given to men. We are not to reject his blessings, because others abuse them; nor are we to regard them as intrinsically unclean, because others have used them

27 If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake.

28 But if any man say unto

for idolatrous purposes. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." 1 Tim. iv. 4.

27. *If any of them that believe not.* Those who are not yet converted to Christianity. ¶ *Bid you to a feast.* That is, in his own house, or elsewhere, except in the idol's temple, which Christians were not to frequent, ch. viii. 10. ¶ *And ye be disposed to go.* If you desire to live on friendly terms with your unconverted neighbors, and to accept the hospitality which they courteously offer. "It is evidently implied here that it would not be improper to go. The Saviour accepted such invitations to dine with the Pharisees, Luke xi. 37; and Christianity is not designed to abolish the courtesies of social life, or to break the bonds of intercourse, or to make men misanthropes or hermits." — *Barnes.* ¶ *Whatsoever is set before you, eat, &c.* There need be no scruple of conscience in regard to the food; nor is it necessary to inquire whence it was procured, whether directly from the butcher or from the idol's temple. The only proper question is, whether it be palatable and conducive to health. Thus far the apostle fully justifies his Gentile brethren in the use of their Christian liberty. It was lawful for them to eat whatever they might purchase in the market, and whatever might be placed before them by their neighbors. If such meats had been offered to idols, they were neither the better nor the worse on that account, but might lawfully be eaten. Yet circumstances might occur, which would render it the duty of Christians to forego the exercise of this liberty, out of respect to the conscientious scruples of others. See ver. 28.

28. *But if any man say unto you, &c.* If any fellow-guest. The host

you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience' sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:

29 Conscience, I say, not

would not be likely to say this, as it would be a breach of courtesy to place before a guest what he could not eat with a good conscience, and a direct insult to call his special attention to it. But it might naturally be said by some scrupulous fellow-Christian, who had ascertained that the meat had once been sacrificed, and therefore believed it to be no longer lawful food. Or it might be said by a heathen, that he might accuse the Christian of acknowledgment and worship of the idol if he ate, or of discourtesy to his host if he refused. What follows, however, seems to confine the reference to the scruples of a believer, but one "weak in the faith." Rom. xiv. 1. ¶ *Eat not, for his sake, &c.* In such a case, the strong should respect the infirmities of the weak, and abstain from such meats, lest the weak brother suffer harm, ch. viii. 9–13. ¶ *And for conscience' sake.* Out of respect to a brother's conscience. See ver. 29. ¶ *For the earth is the Lord's, &c.* This is a repetition of the words in ver. 26, and is omitted in many ancient copies of the Scriptures. If the passage be genuine, it may be understood to mean, that God has made such ample provision for our wants, that it is no great hardship to abstain from a single article of food, to gratify a brother.

29. *Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other.* You "know that an idol is nothing in the world," ch. viii. 4, and that meat offered in sacrifice to an idol is neither sanctified nor polluted thereby. You do no violence to your own conscience by eating it; and it is perfectly lawful to do so. "But there is not in every man that knowledge," ch. viii. 7; and through tenderness to their conscientious scruples, you should forbear eating, lest you grieve them, or unintentionally lead them into sin. Rom. xiv. 21, 23.

thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience?

30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken

¶ *For why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?* At first sight, this question seems contradictory to the general course of the argument. Various methods have been adopted to solve the apparent difficulty. Some suppose the question introduced as an objection to the apostle's doctrine. Others, with more probability, regard it as confirmatory, and in full accordance with what precedes it. "The general idea is repeated in the first person, and in an interrogative form, in order more vividly to present it to the mind. 'For why should I allow my liberty to be judged of another man's conscience?' That is, why should I, by my exercise of freedom, afford an occasion to others for judging me? 'If I partake of the meat with thanks to God (thus in a right state of feeling), why am I evil spoken of, for partaking of meat received with thanksgiving?' That is, wherefore shall I give occasion, in appearance, for evil to be spoken of me? Is it then not better that I should have the necessary regard to the weak, and avoid all offence?"—*Olshausen*. To the same effect is the following:—"The sense may be thus expressed. I am free; I have liberty to partake of that food, if I please; there is no law against it, and it is not morally wrong. But if I do, when it is pointed out to me as having been sacrificed to idols my liberty—the right which I exercise—will be misconstrued, misjudged, condemned, by others. The weak and scrupulous believer will censure, judge, condemn me, as regardless of what is proper, and as disposed to fall in with the customs of idolaters; and will suppose that I cannot have a good conscience. Under these circumstances, why should I act so as to expose myself to this censure and condemnation? It is better for me to abstain, and not to use this liberty in

of for that for which I give thanks?

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give none offence, neither

the case, but to deny myself for the sake of others."—*Barnes*.

30. *For if I, by grace, be a partaker.* If by divine grace I enjoy Christian liberty, and have a lawful right to partake, and if I do partake, giving thanks to God for food as well as for all blessings. ¶ *Why am I evil spoken of?* Why should I so use my liberty as to incur reproach? It is better to deny myself in this as in other respects. See note on ver. 29.

31. *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do.* However general this rule may be, it must be here understood with specific reference to the subject under discussion. Whether ye eat or drink whatsoever is set before you by those who "bid you to a feast," or whether ye refrain, from conscientious scruples entertained by yourself or others; whatever course you may decide to pursue; in all cases, be governed by the following rule. ¶ *Do all to the glory of God.* "Be careful that you act so that the name of God be not blasphemed, or his doctrine evil-thought or evil-spoken of, by reason of your actions. Yea, do and abstain from all things so as to satisfy your own conscience, and discover to others that the honor of God and the advancement of the interests of his kingdom are much dearer to you than any gratifications of your carnal appetites, or any temporal concern."—*Whitby*.

32. *Give none offence.* Do not needlessly shock the prejudices of any, whether believers or not, by insisting on the full exercise of your Christian liberty; but rather, by self-denial in things lawful, secure the confidence and approval of all, that they may the more readily be induced to accept and hold fast the truths of the gospel. ¶ *Neither to the Jews.* The unconverted Jews. Give them no occasion to think that you approve the worship of idols,

to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God :

33 Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

as you would by attending idolatrous feasts. You would thus prejudice their minds the more against Christianity. ¶ *Nor to the Gentiles.* The unconverted heathen. Do not attempt to bring them under subjection to the ritual law of Moses, by forbidding their customary use of meats, as unlawful. Enforce the moral law, show them its beauty, and thus win them to embrace the gospel. ¶ *Nor to the church of God.* To Christians. Many are yet weak in the faith. Abstain from all things, which, though lawful in themselves, might grieve them or lead them into acts which would be sinful in them, being destitute of sufficient faith. "Follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Rom. xiv. 19.

33. *Even as I please all men, &c.* The apostle presents his own example for imitation. He had endeavored to avoid exciting the prejudices and opposition of others, by conforming to their customs, so far as he could do so with a good conscience. And while he unsparingly denounced iniquity, he allowed the largest liberty in things indifferent and non-essential. His conduct, in this regard, is described in this and the two preceding chapters. See particularly ch. ix. 19-23, and the notes.

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter, the apostle proceeds to the consideration of two subjects not before introduced; (1.) the demeanor of women in the public assemblies, ver. 2-16, and (2.) the proper manner of celebrating the Lord's supper, ver. 17-34. The discussion of the first-named subject involves the same principle which underlies the preceding three chapters; the duty, namely, of personal self-denial, in things indifferent, for the promotion of the general good.

CHAPTER XI.

BE ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all

1. *Be ye followers of me, &c.* Imitate my conduct so far as I imitate Christ. As I have denied myself and forborne the full exercise of my Christian liberty in many respects, out of regard to the conscientious scruples of weak brethren, and for the furtherance of the gospel, so do ye. This verse is improperly disconnected from the foregoing chapter, of which it forms the appropriate close.

2. *Now I praise you, brethren.* I commend your fidelity and obedience. However sharply the apostle felt constrained to rebuke his brethren for their misconduct, he never hesitated to express his approval when it was deserved. See note on ch. i. 4. ¶ *That ye remember me in all things, &c.* Some interpreters regard this as a substantial quotation from the letter sent to Paul from Corinth; others consider it as an expression of approval, founded on information otherwise obtained. It is generally supposed that the church at Corinth had requested directions upon the subject here discussed, and this of itself would indicate a disposition to be guided by his instructions. For this disposition he commends them. ¶ *And keep the ordinances, &c.* This seems here to refer to the general directions which the apostle had given, when at Corinth, concerning the order and government of the church. He commends them for observing these ordinances to a great extent, though in some cases they had failed to do so, as appears in ver. 17-34, and in ch. xiv. In regard to the demeanor of women in public, it is generally thought that the practice of the Corinthian church was accordant with the apostolical rule, but that some were attempting to introduce a new practice, and were even contentious because objections were urged against it. See ver. 16.

3. *But I would have you know.*

things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God.

This is a form of serious exhortation to attend to what is about to be said, and implies that it is spoken with authority. ¶ *That the head.* The master, or ruler, as the word often denotes in the Scriptures. "Of every man the head, to whom in all religious matters he must be subject, is Christ; and the head of the woman, to whom in all domestic affairs she must be subject, and from whom she must receive instruction, is the man; and the head of Christ, to whom in saving the world he is subject, is God." — *Mac-knight.* ¶ *Of every man.* Of every believer, Christ is the acknowledged chief, or ruler; in a larger sense, he is the ruler of all, without exception, and in due time his authority, though now disregarded or denied, shall be cheerfully acknowledged and obeyed. Heb. ii. 7-9. ¶ *And the head of the woman is the man.* "The sense is, she is subordinate to him; and in all circumstances, in her demeanor, her dress, her conversation, in public and in the family circle, should recognize her subordination to him. The particular thing here referred to is, that if the woman is inspired and speaks or prays in public, she should by no means lay aside the usual and proper symbols of her subordination. The danger was, that those who were under the influence of inspiration would regard themselves as freed from the necessity of recognizing that, and would lay aside the *veil*, the usual and appropriate symbol of their occupying a rank inferior to the man. This was often done in the temples of the heathen deities, by the priestesses, and it would appear also that it had been done by Christian females in the churches." — *Barnes.* It should be remembered that the relations between the sexes have been materially modified by the spirit of Christianity.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered, dishonoureth her head: for that is

Among the Eastern nations, woman was regarded as the slave of man. It was not much better in Greece and Rome, when this epistle was written. See notes on ver. 16, and ch. vii. 36. It was required of females that they should cover their faces whenever they appeared in public, keep silence in presence of men, and exhibit other outward tokens of their subjection. It was not the province of Christianity nor the design of the apostle to interfere directly with the customs founded on this supposed subjection of one to the other; but rather to let the errors be gradually corrected by the operation of Christian principles. ¶ *And the head of Christ is God.* Here, as elsewhere, the apostle distinguishes between the only true God and his Son, Jesus Christ. However highly the Son be exalted above all other created intelligences, the Father only is supreme.

4. *Every man praying or prophesying.* Not necessarily predicting future events, but teaching or speaking on religious subjects. See note on Rom. xii. 6. The word continued to be used in this sense until a very recent period. The idea is, those who prayed or addressed the brethren in their assemblies for public worship, whether inspired or not. ¶ *Having his head covered.* To uncover the head has been regarded as a mark of respect in almost all nations. The Jews, however, as a token of reverence, were accustomed to put off their shoes or sandals. Ex. iii. 5. ¶ *Dishonoureth his head.* Does not properly honor Christ, his head. Ver. 2. It would be accounted disrespectful to remain covered in the presence of an earthly ruler; much more, when addressing our spiritual ruler, or when speaking in his name.

5. *But every woman that prayeth or*

even all one as if she were shaven.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a wo-

prophesieth, &c. See note on ver. 4. Whether women might pray or teach publicly, under any circumstances, see notes on ch. xiv. 34, 35. The question here is, if they did so, whether they might properly be uncovered. There was an inconsistency in the ancient custom, which has not yet disappeared. In token of respect and honor, and as an acknowledgment of subordination, males were required to be uncovered and females covered. ¶ *Dishonoureth her head.* Does not properly honor or show respect to her husband, or to men generally. According to the customs then existing, the veil was regarded as a token of modesty and subordination, and its removal in public, as a token of immodesty and insubordination. ¶ *For that is even all one as if she were shaven.* "In the East it was reckoned immodest in women to appear unveiled before any of the male sex except their nearest relations. Thus Rebecca veiled herself on seeing Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 65. The immodesty of women appearing unveiled in an assembly of men, the apostle illustrated by observing that it was one and the same thing with being shaven; for, as he tells us, ver. 15, their hair was given them for a veil to improve their beauty.—To deprive women of their hair was considered as a great disgrace. Micah i. 16.—How disgraceful it was for the Grecian women to be shaven may be learned from Aristoph. Thesmoph., line 845. The ancient Germans punished women guilty of adultery by shaving their heads. The Jews also punished adulteresses in the same manner."—*Macknight.*

6. *For if the woman be not covered.* That is, with a veil or its equivalent. If she be bareheaded. ¶ *Let her also be shorn.* Let her long hair be cut off, and this distinguishing indication of sex be also removed. If she will renounce the modesty which becometh

man to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and

her, let her do it entirely. ¶ *But if it be a shame*, &c. See note on ver. 5. If this would be regarded as a disgraceful departure from the rule prescribed by custom. ¶ *Let her be covered.* Let her conform also to this custom, lest she incur the same disgrace which would accompany the loss of her hair.

7. *For a man indeed ought not to cover his head.* That is, when engaged in public worship. ¶ *Forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God.* "True here is the note of Theodoret, that man is here styled the image and glory of God, neither as to his body nor as to his soul; for in respect of the soul, the woman is equally the glory of God, as to spirituality and immortality, and so is equally said to be made after his image. Gen. i. 27; but only as to rule and government, which is the proper glory of a man, according to the Psalmist's words, Ps. viii. 5, 6."—*Whitby.* The reason here assigned why men should be uncovered in the public assemblies, is different from that which is mentioned in ver. 4. In the one case, the uncovered head is a token of subjection to a higher power; in the other, it is a token of superiority over others. ¶ *But the woman is the glory of the man.* His honor, ornament, and helpmeet. This "is one of the many arguments in Scripture where the whole stress and attention is fixed on one word, and all the rest of the imagery is, as it were, left to shift for itself. Such is here the case with the word 'glory.' Taken strictly, the woman is as much the image of God as the man; and the words in Gen. i. 26, are in the original addressed to male and female equally, under the common name of Adam, or man.—But this was not to the purpose of the apostle's present argument, and he therefore puts out of sight the relation of woman to God, by omitting altogether,

glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man cre-

in her case, the word 'image,' and dwells only on her subordination to man, for the sake of which alone he had brought forward the contrast of the greatness of man." — *Stanley*.

8, 9. *For the man is not of the woman, &c.* The man was not originally formed from woman, or for woman; but the woman from man, and for man. Gen. ii. 18, 21-23. They were created for mutual benefit; yet, for certain purposes, precedency was assigned to man. "The whole of Paul's idea here is, that her situation and rank as subordinate, should be recognized by her at all times, and that in his presence it was proper that she should wear the usual symbol of modesty and subordination, the veil." — *Barnes*.

10. This verse has greatly perplexed commentators. The terms are sufficiently plain, but their true application is involved in great obscurity. Fortunately, no important doctrine is affected by it. ¶ *For this cause, &c.* On account of this subordination, and as a symbol of it. ¶ *Ought the woman to have power on her head.* Most commentators agree that *power* here indicates a *veil*, though it is a very unusual sense of the word. "There can, perhaps, be no doubt that the word *power* has reference to a veil, or to a covering for the head; but why it is called *power* I confess I do not understand; and most of the comments on the word are, in my view, egregious trifling." — *Barnes*. ¶ *Because of the angels.* Some commentators confess that they do not understand what is here intended, and attempt no explanation. I should be in good company, if I pursued the same course. I shall, however, state some of the more probable opinions which have been offered. (1.) Some understand by *angels*, messengers sent by the heathen into Christian assemblies, to observe

ated for the woman; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless neither is the

their proceedings, for the purpose of persecuting them or bringing them into disrepute. They suppose the apostle urged proper subordination and decorum, so that none might accuse them of setting at naught the established customs of society, so far as those customs were not sinful. This interpretation is consistent with the meaning of the word rendered *angels*, which is simply *messengers*, whether good or bad, celestial or terrestrial. (2.) Others understand *angels* to mean celestial visitants, guardian spirits, heavenly angels, who might be present in the religious assemblies of Christians. A judicious writer says: "I believe St. Paul uses the word *angels* here, in its most obvious sense, for the heavenly angels, and that he speaks according to the notion which then prevailed among the Jews, that the holy angels interested themselves in the affairs of men, and particularly were present in their religious assemblies, as the cherubim (their representatives) were present in the temple. — The notion, it seems, whether a just one or not, prevailed then among the Jews; and if so, St. Paul might speak agreeably to this vulgar opinion of theirs." — *Pearce*. (3.) "Others, by the *angels*, understand the bishops, who are styled 'angels of the churches.' Rev. i. 20. For they suppose the women were ordered to be veiled, when in the public assemblies they performed the office of teachers, to show their respect to the bishops." — *Macknight*.

11. *Nevertheless.* The apostle here interposes a caution, that men should not over-estimate or over-value their superiority. Although women are in a certain sense subordinate, yet they are not wholly so. Males and females are mutually dependent on each other, and mutually necessary to the happiness of each other; in short, neither

man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12 For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

could continue to exist without the other. ¶ *Neither is the man, &c.* Neither is independent of the other. They were created to be mutual helps, to share each other's joys and sorrows, and their mutual duties are reciprocal and indispensable to the perfect enjoyment of happiness. Men might be less haughty and imperious, if they duly considered their dependence on those whom they superciliously regard as subordinate. ¶ *In the Lord.* This is a divine arrangement, instituted in the beginning, and of perpetual duration. Human customs and fashions are changeable. Opinions as to the relative dignity and rights of the sexes, and the proper degree of subordination of one to the other, vary from age to age. But their mutual necessity, and dependence, and obligations, being established by the Lord, change not; nor can they change, while the race continues to exist on the earth.

12. *For as the woman is of the man.* She was formed at the beginning, from man. Gen. ii. 21, 22. ¶ *Even so is the man also by the woman.* Is born of woman, since the beginning. Mutual dependence is asserted. ¶ *But all things of God.* The relations between the sexes were established by God, the creator of both. There is no occasion for pride on the one hand, or for humiliation on the other.

13. *Judge in yourselves.* Having urged sundry arguments against the practice which he condemns, the apostle here appeals to the judgment of his brethren, and their sense of propriety. A similar appeal was made by our Lord, Luke xii. 57. ¶ *Is it comely, &c.* Is it decent? Does it comport with the established maxims of propriety and modesty? "The Grecian women, excepting the heathen priestesses, used to appear in their

13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

veils when they came into public assemblies, as we find in Homer and many other ancient writers." — *Doddridge.* To appear in public without a veil was regarded as immodest. Their own self-respect should prevent them from unnecessarily exposing themselves to the charge of immodesty.

14. *Doth not even nature itself teach you, &c.* By *nature*, seems here intended that natural sense of propriety which becomes visible in general customs. In all ages, and among all nations, it has been customary for the sexes to be distinguished by different kinds of dress; and almost universally they have been distinguished by long and short hair. "No reason can be given, in the nature of things, why the woman should wear long hair and the man not; but the custom prevails extensively everywhere, and nature, in all nations, has prompted to the same course." — *Barnes.* A departure from this custom is generally considered indecent and improper, having a tendency to obliterate the outward badges of distinction between the sexes. There may be a reason in nature, or in the natural duties and employments of men, why they should not wear the ordinary robes of females, on account of their inconveniency. It would be difficult to assign a like reason why women should not wear the ordinary garb of men. Yet, should they adopt it, the deep-seated sense of propriety in the whole community would cry out against it as immodest and indecent. It might be difficult to assign any reason, in the nature of things, why one part of the body should be covered rather than another; yet the common sense of mankind has established rules on this subject which cannot be violated with impunity, — as many have learned to their shame. See note on ver. 16.

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

¶ *It is a shame unto him.* It is disgraceful, in the common estimation, thus to ape the proper appearance of the opposite sex.

15. *It is a glory to her.* It is a becoming ornament. One general distinction is observable in the whole race of mankind; strength is bestowed on the male, and beauty on the female. Whatever permanently increases the strength of man or the beauty of woman may be regarded as a glory, or as fit and appropriate. By common consent, long hair is considered ornamental to woman, one of the elements of her beauty. ¶ *For her hair is given her for a covering.* This word occurs only here and in Heb. i. 12, where it is translated *vesture*. The long hair of women is not only ornamental, when properly arranged, but it forms a partial covering of the head and portions of the body, when suffered to fall loosely about the shoulders. "What a value the Eastern ladies put on their hair may be known from this, that when Ptolemy Euergetes, king of Egypt, was about to march against Seleucus Callinicus, his queen Berenice, who loved him tenderly, vowed, as the most precious sacrifice she could offer, to cut off and consecrate her hair, if he returned in safety." — *Macknight*.

16. *But if any man seem to be contentious.* Some connect this verse with what follows, understanding the contention to be the same which is mentioned in ver. 18. The more general opinion is, that it relates to the subject previously discussed. It is supposed that some of the false teachers at Corinth insisted that women should be permitted to exercise their full Christian liberty in praying and prophesying in public, uncovered, however much offended and scandalized the church might be at what was regarded as a violation of modesty and good manners. Without denying the *liberty*, the apostle distinctly denies the expediency of the custom, and

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

offers sundry arguments against it. In this, as in other cases, he counsels self-denial for the general good. He would not have his sisters guilty of a breach of decorum, lest the cause of Christianity should be prejudiced thereby. "The apostle, however, insists first on the argument as regards the dishonor done to the husband, by thus seemingly disavowing his authority. And he contrasts the case of covering the head during public worship, as regarded the women and the men respectively. Upon the whole, it must be borne in mind, that all that is here said has respect only to those times, places, and opinions, where the customs were directly the reverse of our own. And accordingly it is of no further importance to us than as furnishing us with a *principle* of universal application; namely, that Christians must not, in externals, rashly recede from decorum; that in things indifferent they should use the same manners and customs as their contemporaries and fellow-countrymen; so that, whatever may be *accounted* as base, must be abstained from, though it may in itself have nothing wrong, in order to avoid all suspicion or offence; and above all, that in public assemblies for religious worship, persons of both sexes should assume such dress and demeanor as are, according to the custom of the country, thought decorous and suitable to their respective relations to each other and to the common Head of the church, so that all things may be done decently and in order." — *Bloomfield*. ¶ *We have no such custom.* If any one is disposed to contend for this exercise of Christian liberty, let him know that we have established no such custom. We rather deny ourselves, and forbear the exercise of our lawful rights, "lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ," ch. ix. 12. We direct that the usual customs of society be observed, if they be not sinful or intrinsically improper, even as we ourselves become "all

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when ye

things to all men," that we may more effectually promote their spiritual welfare. Ch. ix. 22. ¶ *Neither the churches of God.* This custom does not prevail in other churches founded by the apostles. Out of regard to them, therefore, even if for no other reason, you should forbear to pursue a course which will be offensive to them, and will subject them to scandal among their neighbors. "This universal custom in all God's churches cannot therefore be departed from, in accordance with the views of certain who were contentious."—*Olshausen.* This principle remains unchangeable, but its application may lead to different results under a change of circumstances.

17. *Now in this that I declare.* In what I am about to say. The apostle thus introduces an exception to the general commendation in ver. 2. He there praises the general disposition of his friends in the church to observe the ordinances or rules which he had delivered to them. And in the matter of covering the head, it is supposed that his remarks were designed to aid the church in checking an impropriety recently introduced, rather than to rebuke them for one which had been allowed and approved. But he had heard of one gross departure from his rules, and he here calls their attention to that subject. ¶ *I praise you not.* I do not commend your conduct in this particular. ¶ *That ye come together.* That is, for religious worship and the celebration of the Lord's supper, as is manifest from what follows. ¶ *Not for the better, but for the worse.* Your exercises are not profitable, but injurious, because under the influence of a wrong spirit.

18. *For first of all.* First in the order to be named; not necessarily first in importance. ¶ *When ye come together in the church.* Church here indicates the body of believers in their associate capacity; not the building in which they assembled, as the word

come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also

is now frequently used. ¶ *I hear that there be divisions among you.* "Greek, as in the margin, *schisms.* The word properly means a *rent*, such as is made in cloth, Matt. ix. 16; Mark ii. 21; and then a division, a split, a faction among men. John vii. 43; ix. 16; x. 19. It does not mean here that they had proceeded so far as to form separate churches, but that there was discord and division in the church itself."—*Barnes.* From the manner in which this subject is introduced, as if for the first time, we can hardly suppose the apostle to refer to the precise form of divisions mentioned in ch. i. 12. Perhaps the distinction may be this; in the former place he referred to the contention and strife which had arisen in consequence of too highly esteeming individual teachers, which alienated the hearts of the brethren, and checked the growth of Christian love; here he refers to the report which he had heard and partly credited, that their feelings had become so much embittered that they could not worship together in peace, but their contentions broke forth even in the house of prayer. ¶ *And I partly believe it.* Although the reports may be exaggerated, yet I have reason to believe there are dissensions among you, even in your religious assemblies, which need correction and reproof. Some suppose, from the order in which the apostle treats the subjects, that these dissensions had some influence on the disorderly manner of celebrating the Lord's supper.

19. *For there must be, &c.* It is unavoidable in the present state of humanity. A similar form of expression is used by our Lord, Matt. xviii. 7. While men remain subject to vanity, errors will be manifest, both in opinion and in conduct. ¶ *Heresies.* Or sects. See note on Acts xxiv. 14. ¶ *That they which are approved.* "The approved are persons who, on being tried, found are sound in the faith,

heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20 When ye come together

and holy in their practice. One end of God's permitting heresies to arise in the church is for the trial of the faith and holiness of such approved persons, that being made manifest, they may be examples for others to imitate." — *Macknight*. ¶ *May be made manifest among you.* May be distinctly recognized. Steadfastness of faith cannot be known until it is tried; nor firm devotion to duty, until temptation has been encountered and overcome. Both may exist; but their existence cannot be fully demonstrated to one's self, or to others, without such ordeal. But, because such heresies caused the "approved" to "be made manifest," we are not to conclude that this was the only necessity for their existence in the church; much less that they were introduced for this purpose by their authors. The necessity was of another nature; one of the results was the manifestation of the approved.

20. *When ye come together therefore, &c.* When ye assemble for religious worship. See note on ver. 17. ¶ *This is not to eat the Lord's supper.* The general idea here expressed is, that a professedly religious assembly is not necessarily in a fit condition to celebrate the Lord's supper; in other words, the proper celebration of the supper consists not so much in the act performed as in the spirit of the participant. This is expressed in various paraphrases. "I tell you plainly, that when you come together in such a manner as you do, into one place, under pretence of attending this grand solemnity, it is not eating the Lord's supper; it does not deserve to be called by that name." — *Doddridge*. "Your coming together into one house to eat, is not to eat the Lord's supper, unless you eat in fellowship together, and with mutual love, as the disciples of one master." — *Macknight*. "When ye come together it is no true Lord's supper that ye celebrate in so wrong a manner." — *Olshausen*. "Whatever

therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own sup-

per, therefore you may profess to be engaged in, yet really and truly you are not celebrating the Lord's supper." — *Barnes*. ¶ *The Lord's supper.* The solemn service which our Lord Jesus Christ instituted as a commemoration of his death. Ver. 23-26; Matt. xxvi. 26-30. It is called *the Lord's*, because instituted by him; and *supper*, because it was originally partaken at the close of the day, or at "night." Ver. 23.

21. *For in eating.* When you are professedly eating the Lord's supper, but eating in such a disorderly manner that the true intent of the service is entirely changed, and you fail to receive spiritual benefit. For the more clear understanding of what follows, the connection which anciently existed between the "love-feast" and the eucharist should be duly considered. "According to custom among the ancient Christians, the celebration of the love-feast was regularly connected with that of the holy supper, so that the whole ceremony formed a strict commemoration of our Lord's passover feast. Together they are viewed as one and called the Lord's supper. All believers, as members of one divine family, ate and drank together earthly and divine food, in witness of their inward unity for time and eternity. Each individual, according to his ability, brought provision for this festival, which was then consumed in common; and this custom continued to exist down to the end of the fourth century, when, in consequence of the congregations becoming so numerous, it was found necessary to separate the love-feasts from the Lord's supper. Now in Corinth, where the spirit of love had disappeared, these festivals were so conducted that each partook only of what he had provided, the rich enjoying fully, while the poor lacked. The Lord's supper, the supper of love, thereby sank into a private feast, and

per: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What! have ye not houses

was a proceeding without meaning or significance, which each might have performed at home, and the supper connected with it was dishonored." — *Olshausen*. "The statement before us leads to the belief that all was irregular and improper; that they had entirely mistaken the nature of the ordinance, and had converted it into an occasion of ordinary festivity, and even intemperance; that they had come to regard it as a feast in honor of the Saviour, on some such principles as they observed feasts in honor of idols, and that they observed it in some such manner; and that all that was supposed to make it unlike those festivals was, that it was in honor of Jesus rather than an idol, and was to be observed with some reference to his authority and name." — *Barnes*. ¶ *Every one taketh before other his own supper*. "Each begins to eat what he has brought for his own supper, before anything has been given to others, so that while some are hungry others are drunken." — *Conybeare*. "Every one with his own party taketh first his own supper which he hath brought; and the poor being excluded, one verily is hungry on that occasion and another is plentifully fed." — *Macknight*. "The richer members, following probably the example of the common Grecian clubs, seized upon the portion of the food which they had brought, before the poorer members could get hold of it, alleging, in their defence, that they were hungry and could not wait; and the consequence was a scene of general disorder, and a complete disruption of the unity which the feast was intended to promote." — *Stanley*. ¶ *And one is hungry*. The poor, who were unable to contribute provisions, and obtained no share of what was provided by others. ¶ *And another is drunken*. The word translated *drunken* is sometimes used in a mild sense, not implying absolute intoxication. See note on John ii. 10. And in this sense it is here understood by some interpreters. But the more

to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?

general opinion is, that it has in this place its ordinary meaning. It need not surprise us that some of the Corinthians should drink inordinately, even to intoxication, when we consider that they had long been accustomed to idolatrous feasts, which were scenes of revelry and excess, and had not accurately learned the difference between them and the Christian feast. They had very recently been converted to Christianity, and had made slight progress in Christian knowledge. Growth in knowledge, as well as in grace, is essential to the newly converted. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

22. *What!* An emphatic exclamation of disapproval and rebuke. ¶ *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in?* Let your feasting, if ye will indulge in it, be at home, in the privacy of your own houses. You have no need to expose yourselves to the public gaze, whether your repasts be moderate or immoderate. A religious assembly is not designed for the gratification of bodily appetites, but for holier purposes. ¶ *Or despise ye the church of God?* Some understand the *church* to denote the place of meeting, the building in which the assembly convened. But the word *ἐκκλησία* seems not to have this meaning elsewhere in the New Testament; nor need it be so understood here. The practice rebuked by the apostle was contemptuous of the whole church of God, who regarded the Lord's supper as a sacred and solemn rite; and he appeals to them whether they really entertained that contempt which their conduct indicated. ¶ *And shame them that have not*. And put the poor to open shame. The theory of Christianity is, that the rich and poor, the bond and free, stand on a level. It is unchristian, therefore, to expose the poor to public ridicule. "If they must struggle with want, they ought to be left to bear it at home, not shamed with it by rude comparison with the plenty of their richer brethren." — *Bloomfield*. ¶ *What shall I say to*

What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the *same* night in which he was betrayed, took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said,

you? How shall I sufficiently express my disapprobation of such conduct? ¶ *I praise you not.* Whatever praise you may merit in other respects, I cannot praise you for conduct so utterly unbecoming the disciples of Christ, so inconsistent with that spirit of love which should characterize them.

23. *For, &c.* As the best way to convince the Corinthians of their error, the apostle states the true character and design of the Lord's supper, that by contrast they might clearly see how they had abused it, and desecrated it. This, in point of time, is the earliest account given of the institution of the supper: for this epistle was written several years before either of the gospels. ¶ *I have received of the Lord.* Paul did not receive knowledge of this institution from his fellow-apostles, nor from any other human authority; but it was made known to him by direct revelation. In this manner, indeed, he received most of his instruction in the gospel. Gal. i. 11, 12. At what particular time this was revealed to him does not appear; for he had many divine communications subsequently to his memorable experience on the way to Damascus, according to the promise then given to him. Acts xxvi. 16; 2 Cor. xii. 7. He mentions this fact, that his brethren might not regard the institution as of human and questionable authority; but might realize their obligation to observe it in the manner prescribed by the Lord Jesus Christ. ¶ *That which I also delivered unto you.* This was one of the truths which he communicated, when preaching at Corinth; and he had doubtless instituted the celebra-

Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this

tion of the supper in the church. But, as the brethren had so widely departed from the prescribed form of observance, he now repeats his instructions. ¶ *The same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.* See note on Matt. xxvi. 26. The time of its institution increases its interest and its solemnity.

24. *And when he had given thanks.* Matthew says, "and blessed it"; but the two forms are substantially alike. ¶ *Take, eat, &c.* See note on Matt. xxvi. 26.

25. *After the same manner.* Greek, *likewise.* ¶ *He took the cup, when he had supped, saying, &c.* See notes on Matt. xxvi. 27, 28. Barnes and others suppose the phrase "when he had supped" affords proof that the whole service of the supper, both eating and drinking, was after the conclusion of the paschal feast: and that this was urged by the apostle to show the impropriety of the Corinthian custom. To me, this seems to be an unnatural conclusion. The simple idea expressed is, that after Jesus had partaken of the bread with his disciples, he gave them the cup. However true it may be, that the Lord's supper was instituted at the close of the paschal feast, or even after its ceremonies were fully ended, and that it was designed as an institution entirely separate and distinct from the passover, I apprehend that fact is not proved by this phrase. ¶ *In remembrance of me.* See note on Luke xxii. 19.

26. *For as often as ye eat this bread, &c.* This is the language of Paul. The words of Jesus, used at the institution of the supper, are contained in ver. 24, 25. "This is a direct and positive refutation of the doctrine of

bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this*

the Papists that the bread is changed into the real body of the Lord Jesus. Here it is expressly called *bread*, bread still, bread after the consecration. Before the Saviour instituted the ordinance he took bread; it was bread then; it was bread which he blessed and brake; and it was bread when it was given to them; and it was bread when Paul here says they *ate*. How then can it be pretended that it is anything else but bread? And what an amazing absurdity it is to believe that that bread is changed into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ!"—*Barnes*. ¶ *Ye do show the Lord's death*. You commemorate his death. By an exhibition of the emblems of his body and blood, you express publicly your belief that he died; and by partaking of those emblems, you publicly manifest your hope of spiritual blessings through him. ¶ *Till he come*. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 29; Luke xxii. 20. "Two characteristics of their Eucharist are here given. (1) 'You preach' or 'announce,' according to the constant usage of the word; ch. ii. 1; ix. 14; Acts *passim*; as if he said, 'The Lord's supper is a living sermon, an acted discourse!' It is the death of our Lord which was chiefly intended to be commemorated; and hence the stress laid in ver. 23 on the betrayal. (2.) It was intended to supply, by a visible memorial, the absence of the Lord 'until he come,' the sense being brought out more strongly by the near expectation of his return. Comp. Matt. xxvi. 29."—*Stanley*.

27. *Wherefore*. Such being the nature and design of the Lord's supper, this follows. To convince the Corinthians of their error, the apostle has stated the true character of the supper. To induce them to forsake their disorderly custom, he now shows them the consequences of persisting in it. ¶ *Whosoever shall eat, &c.* That is, as

cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of

a religious service; as a celebration of the Lord's supper. ¶ *Unworthily*. "In a manner unworthy of and unsuitable to the purposes for which this rite was instituted."—*Bloomfield*. The word refers, not to the character of the persons performing the service, but to the manner in which they perform it. All men are in a less or greater degree unworthy to sit at the Lord's table; but it is spread for the benefit of such, that they may receive spiritual benefit and be made more and more worthy of this high privilege, and they may lawfully partake, if they do so in a proper manner and with a right spirit. The peculiar unworthiness to which the apostle refers is indicated in verse 29. ¶ *Shall be guilty of the body, &c.* "Will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord."—*Conybeare*. "Shall be guilty of profaning the symbols of the body and blood of the Lord."—*Macknight*. "He will be guilty with respect to the body, that is, guilty of profaning the symbols of the body and blood of Christ, and consequently will be amenable to the punishment due to such an irreverence and abuse of the highest of the means of grace."—*Bloomfield*. "So that if this symbol represents the death of the Lord, he who eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily (as they do who make such uncharitable and proud distinctions of persons at your love-feasts, and who there feast with so much intemperance), I say such a one will be esteemed by God as doing an act of irreverence to the body and blood of Christ, represented by the bread and wine."—*Pearce*.

28. *But let a man examine himself*. Self-examination is an important Christian duty. It is especially important as a preparation for approach to the Lord's table. It is as important to Christians now, as it was to the ancient Corinthians, though the ad-

that bread, and drink of that cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to him-

monition was addressed to them with a specific reference; namely, that they should satisfy themselves whether they were prepared to partake of the supper in a proper manner, with a correct view of its nature and design, and with a knowledge of what was signified by the bread and the wine. We should make a like examination of ourselves. And we should examine also and chiefly, whether we are in a fit frame of spirit, and whether we truly desire and expect to receive spiritual nourishment through the commemoration of our Lord's death, and through faith in his resurrection which demonstrated the truth of immortality. ¶ *And so let him eat, &c.* Let him be guided by the result of his examination. If he believe he may do so properly and profitably, let him unite in the commemoration; otherwise, let him refrain.

29. *For he that eateth, &c.* The apostle has before mentioned the guilt involved in the disorderly practices which he condemned. In this verse he speaks of the consequences. ¶ *Unworthily.* See note on ver. 27. ¶ *Eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.* "Condemnation, and consequently punishment, by the infliction of some bodily infirmity, sickness, or death." — *Bloomfield.* "According to our use of the word now, there is a harshness and severity in our translation which the Greek does not require, and which probably was not conveyed by the word *damnation* when the translation was made. In the margin it is correctly rendered *judgment*. The word here used properly denotes judgment, that is, a sentence; then a sentence by which one is condemned, or condemnation: and then punishment. See Rom. iii. 8; xiii. 2. It has evidently the sense of judgment here; and means that by their improper manner of observing this ordinance, they would expose themselves to the divine

self, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

displeasure, and to punishment. And it refers, I think, to the punishment or judgment which the apostle immediately specifies, ver. 30, 32. It means a manifestation of the divine displeasure which might be evinced in this life; and which, in the case of the Corinthians, was manifested in the judgment which God brought upon them." — *Barnes.* In this interpretation, almost all the commentators substantially agree. See Selections. ¶ *Not discerning the Lord's body.* "Because he maketh no difference of the Lord's body." — *Tyndale.* "Since he makes no difference between the Lord's body and common food." — *Conybeare.* "Because he does not discriminate the symbols of the body of the Lord from common bread and wine designed for the nourishment of life." — *Macknight.* See note on Rom. xiv. 23, where the same word occurs. This was the great error of the Corinthians; instead of regarding the Lord's supper as a memorial of the death of our Lord, and observing it in remembrance of him, they partook of it as an ordinary meal, or as a feast like those of the idolaters; and the disorders mentioned in ver. 20-22, were the natural consequence.

30. *For this cause.* As the result of your improper and disorderly practices. ¶ *Many are weak and sickly among you.* Afflicted with bodily sickness and disease; perhaps the natural result of their gluttony and intemperance; or, possibly, an extraordinary display of divine justice. ¶ *And many sleep.* Many have already died; for such is not an unusual sense of the word. "In the sicknesses and deaths which prevailed at Corinth, the apostle calls upon the Corinthians to witness the judgments on their profanation of the supper. It may be that these sicknesses were the direct consequences of the excesses which seem implied in ver. 22 and 34; but in any

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord,

case, there must have been some commotion not evident to us, which would lead the Corinthians to recognize the truth of his remark."—*Stanley*. Physical judgments, not naturally growing out of the crime, are mentioned in the Scriptures. See notes on Acts v. 5; xiii. 11. In this case, however, a natural connection is perceptible between the crime and its punishment.

31. *For if we would judge ourselves.* If we would discriminate ourselves; or make a difference between ourselves and the disorderly persons mentioned. The same word occurs here which is translated "discerning" in ver. 29. "If we would make a difference in ourselves. In ver. 29, he had mentioned their not making a difference between the body of the Lord and common food. Here he speaks of their making a difference in themselves."—*Macknight*. ¶ *We should not be judged.* Or, disapproved; or, become liable to punishment; or, be punished. "These words are exegetical of the preceding; and the sense is, if we would so judge and discern ourselves, as before mentioned, namely, whether we receive the Lord's supper worthily or not, we should not be adjudged to suffer such punishments as those just adverted to."—*Bloomfield*.

32. *But when we are judged.* When we are adjudged guilty, and are punished for our transgressions; that is, as the words are here used, in regard to the improper manner of observing the supper. ¶ *We are chastened by the Lord.* The apostle here indicates the nature of punishment or divine retribution. It is designed to instruct, and to reform, and thus to benefit the offender. The word *παιδεύω*, one form of which is here used, occurs thirteen times in the New Testament; it is generally translated *chasten* or *chastise*; but it is also rendered *instructing*, 2 Tim. ii. 25; *teaching*, Titus ii. 12; *taught*, Acts xxii. 3; and *learn*, Acts vii. 22; 1 Tim. i. 20. The etymology of the word

that we should not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

indicates the discipline suited to the condition of a child, which is administered by a father. Its design, under the divine administration is particularly described in Heb. xii. 5-11. "We are under the discipline of the Lord; we are dealt with as children, and are corrected as by the hand of a father. Comp. Heb. xii. 5-10, and 2 Cor. vi. 9. The design of God's correcting his children is, that they should be reclaimed, and not destroyed."—*Barnes*. ¶ *That we should not be condemned with the world.* That we may not be given over to the condition of the heathen generally, from which we have once been delivered. See note on John iii. 18. The Corinthians had professed faith in Christ. Notwithstanding all their errors, they were in fact believers. Yet their disorderly practices tended to a relapse into heathenish idolatry. This danger is referred to in ch. x. 14-23. God had chastened them, that he might keep them in the fold of faith, and preserve them from again wandering into darkness and the region of spiritual death.

33. *When ye come together to eat.* Namely, to eat the Lord's supper. ¶ *Tarry one for another.* Do not greedily devour the food which you have provided, excluding your poorer brethren from the repast. Observe the rules of common decency, and of Christian courtesy and love. See note on ver. 21. Regarding each other as fellow-disciples of one Master, assembled to commemorate the highest possible exhibition of that Master's love to all, John xv. 13, let perfect order, sobriety, and affectionate mutual respect characterize your conduct.

34. *If any man hunger, let him eat at home.* The Lord's table is not designed for feasting, or for the gratification of the appetite: it is not designed even for the ordinary refreshment needful to the body. It is

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

designed solely for spiritual refreshment; that, by the commemoration of the Lord's love, the faith of believers may be confirmed, their hope made to abound through the power of the Holy Ghost, Rom. xv. 13, and their love increased. Let not this table be desecrated by improper use. Let it not be converted to purposes of feasting and banqueting, or even of ordinary refreshment taken in moderation. Your own houses are the proper places where the cravings of hunger should be satisfied, ver. 22. Let the demands of nature be satisfied there. ¶ *That ye come not together unto condemnation.* "That the effect of your coming together for the observance of the Lord's supper be not to produce condemnation." — *Barnes*. The condemnation is manifestly the same which is mentioned in ver. 29. The manner in which they were liable to incur it is described in ver. 21. And one method to avoid it is pointed out in this verse. Let each one satisfy the demands of hunger at home. They might then assemble at a spiritual feast, and find substantial refreshment in the memorials of a Saviour's dying love. ¶ *And the rest.* Whatever other irregularities might exist in regard to the subject under discussion. Some suppose the apostle referred to other matters on which he had been consulted. But as he proceeds to discuss some of these at least, it seems more probable that the first interpretation is correct. ¶ *Will I set in order.* I will give full instructions. ¶ *When I come.* It would seem that Paul designed to visit Corinth soon, and to give personal advice and direction. This design was frustrated, 2 Cor. i. 15-17, and he wrote a second epistle. As he does not, in that epistle, refer again to this subject, it may be presumed the disorders here rebuked had been discontinued. The same fact may be inferred from 2 Cor. vii. 14.

CHAPTER XII.

NOW concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

CHAPTER XII.

In this chapter a new subject is introduced, namely, that of spiritual gifts or endowments. The discussion extends through three chapters. The general scope of the whole is briefly expressed, thus: "In ch. xii., St. Paul shows that all those gifts were alike effected by the Holy Ghost, and all were for the use of the church; and, therefore, that no one should value himself upon his gifts so far as to condemn another who had an inferior gift: in ch. xiii., he recommends love as a greater perfection than all the gifts of the Holy Ghost put together, because all those gifts must cease here, but love will remain forever in heaven: and in ch. xiv., he gives particular rules about the use of their gifts in the public assemblies." — *Pearce*. It is generally supposed that this subject was embraced in the letter from the Corinthians, to which the apostle alludes, ch. vii. 1, and that what follows was in answer to their inquiries.

1. *Now concerning, &c.* This is a general statement of the subject, as in ch. vii. 1; viii. 1. ¶ *Spiritual gifts.* "The word 'gifts' is not in the original. The Greek refers to 'spiritual' things in general, or to anything that is of a spiritual nature. The whole discussion, however, shows that he refers to the various endowments, gifts, or graces that had been bestowed in different degrees on the members of the church, including the distinctions in graces, and in degrees of office and rank, which had been made in the Christian church in general, as well as the extraordinary endowments of the gift of tongues which had been bestowed on many." — *Barnes*. ¶ *I would not have you ignorant.* I would have you distinctly understand. This phrase is frequently used by the apostle as introductory to the discussion of a subject at some length. See

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 Wherefore I give you to un-

derstand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Rom. i. 13; 1 Cor. x. 1; 2 Cor. i. 8; 1 Thess. iv. 13.

2. *Ye know that ye were Gentiles.* The Gentile portion of the church is here specially addressed, either because they were chiefly those who adhered to Paul, and asked his advice, while the Jewish portion partook of the general prejudices of their countrymen against him, or perhaps because the Gentiles were more surprised and elated by the manifestation of spiritual gifts than the Jews, who had personally, or at least historically been accustomed to similar manifestations through their prophets. ¶ *Carried away.* "Blindly led astray."—*Conybeare.* Deluded by passion, or by vain philosophy, or by magnificent idolatrous rites. ¶ *Unto these dumb idols.* So denominated by the ancient prophets, to denote their vanity. Ps. cxv. 5; cxxxv. 16; Jer. x. 5; Hab. ii. 18, 19. This characteristic of those imaginary idols, which were actually "nothing in the world," ch. viii. 4, may be particularly mentioned here, in reference to the absurdity of believing that idols, who could not speak, could endow their votaries with the gift of tongues. ¶ *Even as ye were led.* "The unconscious irrational state of heathenism, in which the worshippers were blindly hurried away as by some overruling power of fate, or evil spirit of divination, or priestly caste, without any will or reason of their own, to worship at the shrines of these no less inanimate idols, is contrasted with the consciousness of an indwelling spirit, moving in harmony with their spirits, and controlled by a sense of order and wisdom."—*Stanley.*

3. *I give you to understand.* I assure you. I make the fact known to you. I announce to you a rule by which you may distinguish accurately what influences and operations are of divine origin. A similar rule is given

in 1 John iv. 2, 3. ¶ *That no man.* Whether Jew or Gentile; whether a professed worshipper of God or of idols. ¶ *Speaking by the Spirit of God.* Speaking by inspiration; guided in his speech by "the Spirit of truth." John xiv. 17. ¶ *Calleth Jesus accursed.* Greek, *anathema.* See note on Rom. ix. 3. The idea is, that no one, under the influence of the divine Spirit, could pronounce Jesus an impostor, or say that he was justly cut off from life as a transgressor. ¶ *And that no man can say, &c.* That is, can realize and say it heartily, in faith. No man embraces Jesus as the Christ, and sincerely acknowledges him as Lord, except through the divine influence upon his heart. See Matt. xvi. 16, 17; John vi. 44. "No teacher speaks by the Spirit of God, who calls Jesus *accursed*, that is, who affirms that Jesus was justly punished with the accursed death of the cross. Probably some of the heathen priests and priestesses, in their pretended fits of inspiration, had spoken in this manner of Jesus. On the other hand, every teacher speaks by the Spirit of God, who acknowledges Jesus to be Lord, and endeavors to persuade men to become his disciples."—*Macknight.* The nature and importance of this rule, and its connection with what follows, are well stated thus:—"You maintain that the influence of the Spirit is confined to its most striking manifestations. But you know that, by the mere fact of your conversion, you passed from a state where all was dead and dumb to a state of life and conscious speech. The contrast between these two states is so great, that you cannot but acknowledge that as, on the one hand, you cannot conceive any one under the influence of the Spirit giving vent to any utterance against this new state, so, on the other hand, even the very first and simplest utterance of that new state could have proceeded only from

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of

the Spirit. — If then every utterance of a Christian is inspired by the Holy Ghost, then we must allow the possibility of a vast variety of gifts, all proceeding from the same Spirit; a vast variety of services, all under the same Master, whose sovereignty was acknowledged by means of that Spirit; a vast variety of effects, proceeding from the same God, who acts by that Spirit.” — *Stanley*.

4. *Now there are diversities of gifts.* There are different endowments. These are particularly specified in ver. 8-10. ¶ *But the same Spirit.* The same divine Spirit which leads all Christians to “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” ver. 3; Phil. ii. 11, bestows also those special endowments, such as gifts of healing, and of miracles, and of prophecy, and of tongues, by which one is distinguished from another. The argument is, that as all these gifts are derived from the same source, none can properly boast, or despise others whose gifts may be different. Even the gift of faith, bestowed alike on all Christians, is from the same source, and its recipients are not to be despised by those who have received additional endowments.

5. *And there are differences of administrations.* Or of *ministers*, as the word is generally translated. “Diversities of services.” — *Haweis*. “Ministrations.” — *Conybearc*. These are specified in ver. 28. ¶ *But the same Lord.* Whatever special service be assigned to any one, whether to rule as an apostle, to instruct as a prophet or teacher, to arouse the attention of unbelievers or to confirm the faith of believers by the performance of miracles, or to perform the duties proper to the humblest station, all are responsible to the same Master, even to the Lord Jesus, whose servants they are; and the true honor of each depends not on the nature of the service allotted to him, but on his faithfulness in its performance. The service of each is necessary to the good of the whole. No one can say he has

administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of

no need of the other, ver. 21, nor has any one one cause for boasting over another.

6. *And there are diversities of operations.* God is not confined to any one method for the accomplishment of his purposes. In grace as in nature, he employs different agencies, which severally contribute to the general result. In the establishment of the reign of grace on the earth, he first sent his well-beloved Son, who bore witness to the truth, sealed it with his blood, and demonstrated it by his resurrection. Then the apostles and primitive disciples were employed, some to plant and some to water, and some to minister in other capacities. Wisdom and instruction were manifested through some, the healing of diseases through others, miraculous powers through others, the utterance of unknown tongues through others, and so of the rest. The services of all were required, in their several order, for the accomplishment of the great purpose of God. But all those services were inspired by the same God, were merely the diverse operations of his Spirit and power, and were effectual only by his blessing, ch. iii. 6. ¶ *But it is the same God which worketh all in all.* His agency is universal; as actually in the almost imperceptible growth of the blade of grass, as in the stupendous revolutions of planets and suns; in the humblest Christian, as in the angels who surround his throne. Thus in the early church, as the same God, who “wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, was mighty in” Paul “toward the Gentiles,” Gal. ii. 8, so also he wrought, by all grades of officers and members of the church. He literally wrought “all in all,” all labor in all the laborers. Why then should one exalt himself or abase another? Why claim more abundant honor than another? Why not rather humbly acknowledge, with the apostle, that “neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the in-

operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the

Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

crease?" ch. iii. 7. By this general statement, the apostle exposed the folly of that strife for precedence, which had occasioned so much disturbance in the Corinthian church, and rebuked the pride of those who undervalued the more humble.

7. *But the manifestation of the Spirit.* The Spirit becomes manifest in the gifts bestowed. "The idea is, that there is given to those referred to, such gifts, endowments, or graces, as shall manifest the work and nature of the Spirit's operations on the mind; such endowments as the Spirit makes himself known by to men."—*Barnes*. Our Lord appealed to the same kind of evidence that the Spirit of the Father dwelt in him and was manifest in him. John x. 37, 38. ¶ *Is given to every man.* This is doubtless said with special reference to the Christian church, its officers and members; for of these the apostle is here particularly speaking. They were to understand that all their endowments and graces were given to them, and that gratitude and humility should be cherished by them. It is also true that God manifests himself to all his intelligent offspring, by the influences of his Spirit. He hath not left himself without witness even among the heathen. See note on Acts xiv. 17. And the "true light," in due time, will enlighten "every man that cometh into the world." See note on John i. 9. ¶ *To profit withal.* "For the profit of all."—*Conybeare*. "For usefulness."—*Haweis*. The idea is, that these gifts were bestowed not only for individual but for general benefit; not only for the advantage of the recipient, but to make him useful to others. "To each is given the gift by which the presence of the Spirit with him is manifested, not for advancing his honor, but for promoting the advantage of all; so that in respect of the end for which they exercise

their spiritual gifts, the spiritual men are all equal."—*Macknight*.

8. In ver. 8-20, the apostle names particularly the several gifts mentioned in ver. 4, and in ver. 11 repeats substantially what is said in ver. 6. ¶ *The word of wisdom.* To one he grants wisdom. "The 'word,' or utterance, is added, to express that it was through their communication in teaching that these gifts became known."—*Stanley*. That wisdom is a gift from God is plainly indicated in the Scriptures. 2 Chron. i. 7-12; Jas. i. 5. ¶ *The word of knowledge.* To another he grants knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge differ in some important respects. A man may know much, and yet be destitute of wisdom sufficient to turn his knowledge to profitable account; another, whose knowledge of facts is very limited may exhibit much wisdom in the use of his limited advantages. In the text, however, the apostle is supposed to refer specially to spiritual knowledge of the gospel, and to wisdom in regard to its nature, requisitions, obligations, and promises, not excluding but including knowledge, yet higher than mere knowledge. ¶ *By the same Spirit.* This is repeated here and in ver. 9, that the fact announced in ver. 4 might not be overlooked or forgotten.

9. *To another faith.* Some suppose the apostle here refers to that firm and unwavering confidence in the truth of the Gospel, which cheers and sustains the hearts of the most humble believers; those, namely, who have not the gift of teaching, or even of thoroughly understanding its more abstruse and recondite doctrines. Even such faith is given by the same Spirit which gives ability to teach, and is equally a manifestation of divine grace. Others suppose the reference is to that extraordinary faith, which was connected with the performance of miracles. See Matt.

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

xvii. 20; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. ¶ *To another the gifts of healing.* This gift was promised to the apostles, Mark xvi. 18; and it was repeatedly exercised, Acts iii. 6, 7; v. 16; xiv. 8-10; xix. 12; xxviii. 8.

10. *To another the working of miracles.* The healing of the sick, indicated in ver. 9, is generally understood to have been miraculous. The apostle may here refer to the power to perform other miracles than healing, whether of a more general or a more extraordinary character. It would seem that there was a difference among those who had received miraculous powers, as there is among those who possess the ordinary powers of intelligence, memory, foresight, of bodily strength or activity. In either case all these powers are bestowed by the same God, and should inspire their possessors with gratitude and humility rather than with pride. ¶ *To another prophecy.* Prophecy signifies the prediction of future events. But it is here apparently used in a larger sense, to denote the interpretation of the gospel, for the instruction of others. See ch. xiv. 3, 4, and note on Rom. xii. 6. ¶ *To another discerning of spirits.* The ability to read the human heart, and to discern by what spirit it was influenced, seems to have been granted to the apostles. Examples of this power are exhibited in relation to the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 1-10, and of Elymas the sorcerer, Acts xiii. 9-11. In 1 John iv. 1, reference is made rather to a rule by which spirits may be tried, than to a miraculous power of insight. There were pretenders then even as now. It was important that the apostles should be able to detect impostors. Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Pet. ii. 1. ¶ *To another divers kinds of tongues.* The power to speak in languages which they had never learned. This gift was first bestowed

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and

on the day of Pentecost. Acts ii. 1-11.

¶ *To another the interpretation of tongues.* The power to interpret or translate the foreign languages spoken under the influence of the Spirit. Because one spoke a foreign language it did not necessarily follow that he understood it. It was necessary, at least, that he or some one else should interpret it, that the hearers, to whom the language was foreign, might be profited. See ch. xiv. 11, 27, 28.

11. *But all these worketh that one and the selfsame spirit.* All these endowments are the gift of the same Spirit, and are different manifestations of the same divine energy. See ver. 6. ¶ *Dividing to every man severally.* Bestowing on each one his peculiar gift. ¶ *As he will.* According to his own pleasure. This is added as an additional argument against pride and vainglory. Not only were all spiritual endowments bestowed as a gift, but their bestowment was guided solely by the divine will, not according to any previous merit in the recipient. See Rom. ix. 11, 12. For the general lesson to be derived from this diversity of gifts enforcing humility and gratitude, see note on Rom. xii. 6.

12. In ver. 12-27, the apostle illustrates and enforces his argument by analogy. The human body is composed of various members, each necessary to the good of the whole, and none to be despised as useless. So the "body of Christ," which is the church, has many members, differing it may be in apparent importance, but all necessary to the completeness of the whole. Hence it follows, that the most highly exalted cannot properly say to the humblest, "I have no need of thee;" but all are mutually dependent, and their several stations are alike honorable in the sight of God. ¶ *For as the body is one, &c.* All the members, some of which are specified

all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whither *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

in the following verses, constitute a single body; their harmonious union is essential to completeness; not one of them is redundant or useless. ¶ *So also is Christ.* That is, the body of Christ, or the church. See ver. 27. All the variety of station or gifts, some of which are specified in ver. 28, are necessary to the completion of the church. None are to be despised as superfluous. No one has occasion for pride, as if superior in importance to others, ver. 21.

13. *For by one Spirit, &c.* "The same God worketh all in all," ver. 6. The fact so frequently asserted in the preceding verses, that the divine Spirit bestows all the gifts and graces, all the powers and endowments, all in short which makes Christians substantially alike yet specifically different, is here repeated. ¶ *Are we all baptized.* There may be an allusion here to the ordinance of water-baptism, which was generally used as the symbol of the profession of faith. See note on Matt. iii. 6. But the substantial and important reference is rather to the operation of divine grace on the heart. Matt. iii. 11. ¶ *Into one body.* By faith in Christ and by the purifying influence of the divine spirit on the heart, we become united into one common brotherhood, or body of Christians. See John xvii. 20-23. ¶ *Whether we be Jews or Gentiles.* The grace of God is not confined to any one nation. Acts x. 34, 35. Of whatever nation, race, or kindred, all who have the Spirit of Christ are one in him. ¶ *Whether we be bond or free.* Divine grace has no respect to human distinctions of rank or condition. Whosoever is "the Lord's freeman," is spiritually the peer of the haughtiest ruler or master. All stand on a level in the Lord's presence,

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

and all are equally important, in their several places, as members of the one body of Christ. ¶ *And have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* The allusion is probably to the drinking of one common cup at the Lord's supper. But the important fact alleged is, that all true Christians have imbibed the same Spirit; have experienced the operation of the divine Spirit on the heart. The general idea is, that however various the endowments of the several disciples of Christ, and however various the positions or the duties assigned to them respectively, they are all members of one body, fashioned alike and fitted to their several stations by the same divine Spirit; and none therefore should undervalue others.

14. *For the body, &c.* The human body does not consist in a single member, but in all. The head alone is not the body; neither is the foot. Each is necessary to the other; and all the members are necessary to the whole body. The implied argument is, that the body of Christ is so constituted.

15. *If the foot shall say, &c.* The idea is, because one occupies what may be regarded as an inferior condition, this does not excuse him from the performance of his appropriate duty. As well might the foot refuse to support the body, on the supposition that it was not a part of it. Each is necessary to the other.

16. *And if the ear shall say, &c.* The same idea is repeated, in a slightly different form. "Bengelius thinks that, in this allegory, the foot signifies the common people in the church; the hand, the president; the eyes, the teachers; and the ears, the learners."—*Macknight.* It would be more

17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

proper to say, that these parts of the body bear some resemblance to the several members of the church.

17. *If the whole body were an eye, &c.* If the body consisted of a single organ, it would necessarily be destitute of all else which now contributes to its convenience and happiness. See note on ver. 21. The argument implied is, that it would be just as absurd to insist on an absolute equality of endowment and station in the church. Rather should each be content in his own sphere, and cheerfully perform his absolute duty for the general benefit of the whole body.

18. *But now hath God set the members, &c.* He hath so constructed the body, that all its members are necessary to its completeness, and not one could be spared without injury to the others.

19, 20. *And if all were one member, &c.* The absurdity of a body consisting of a single member is graphically exhibited. The sentiment of ver. 17 is repeated in a different form. If only one member exist, all others are necessarily excluded. Such, the apostle says, is not the manner in which God has constructed the body. He has combined many members into one body. It is implied, that such also is the constitution of the Christian church.

21. *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, &c.* "The hand in its place is as useful as the eye; and the feet as the head. Nay, the eye and the head could not perform their appropriate functions, or would be in a great measure useless, but for the aid of the hands and feet. Each is useful in its proper place. So in the church. Those that are most talented, and

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we be-

most richly endowed with gifts, cannot say to these less so, that there is no need of their aid. All are useful in their place. Nay, those who are most richly endowed could very imperfectly perform their duties without the aid and co-operation of those of more humble attainments."—*Barnes.*

22. *Nay, much more, &c.* Especially is this true in regard to those members of the body which are more liable to injury on account of their delicate organization. Some suppose particular reference is made to the brain, and the lungs, and the heart, delicately organized, incapable of resisting violence, yet absolutely essential to the existence of the body. An eye, an ear, a hand, a foot, may be destroyed, and the body continue to exist, though in a mutilated and incomplete condition. But it cannot exist without brain, and lungs, and heart. So some stations in the church and their occupants, might have been regarded as unimportant by those who prided themselves upon the magnitude of their gifts. The apostle intimates that even these "more feeble" members are indispensably necessary to the existence of the church.

23. *Which we think to be less honourable, &c.* The particular portions of the body here referred to "are perhaps best left undefined, as the apostle has himself left them; the words being apparently accumulated and varied designedly, so as to include all parts of the human frame, without more particularly specifying any."—*Stanley.* "This observation, concerning the pains which we take in adorning or concealing the weak and uncomely members of our body, the apostle

stow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

makes, to teach the highest members of the church to advance the honor of the whole body, by concealing the weakness and imperfection of the lowest, and by setting off their gifts and graces, whatever they may be, to the best advantage, for the reason mentioned, ver. 25."—*Macknight*.

24. *For our comely parts have no need.* The face, for example, needs no ornament, but may be left naked and unadorned. ¶ *But God hath tempered the body together.* Or, mingled, mixed, intimately connected its several parts or members, so that each one is indispensably necessary to the perfection of the whole. ¶ *Having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.* "By making it necessary that we should labor in order to procure for it the needful clothing; thus making it more the object of our attention and care. We thus bestow more abundant honor upon those parts of the body which a suitable protection from cold, and heat, and storms, and the sense of comeliness, requires us to clothe and conceal. The more abundant honor, therefore, refers to the greater attention, labor, and care, which we bestow on all those parts of the body."—*Barnes*. Or, we may understand that God hath given those members of the body which *lack* in comeliness "more abundant honor," because he hath made them most of all essential to the nourishment and preservation of the whole body.

25. *That there should be no schism in the body.* Or division, or separation, by which any part would be deprived of assistance from the others. ¶ *Should have the same care one for another.* Should mutually administer to the necessity and the well-being of the whole. The eye should be watchful against danger;

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

the hand labor diligently; the foot readily obey the impulse of the will for a change of position; and so of the rest. The lesson inculcated by this description of the human body is, that although a great variety of official or other condition exist in the church, there should be no pride on the one hand, nor jealousy or envy on the other; but that each, whether high or low, should seek the good of the whole, and cheerfully contribute his own exertions to that end. The same lesson is applicable to the whole human race, with its infinite variety of outward condition. All are brethren in one family, and children of one Father. Hence they should dwell together in peace, and each regard the welfare of others. See notes on Rom. xii. 4, 5.

26. *And whether one member suffer.* The apostle here changes the form of his illustration. Not only does the completeness of the human body depend on the full and entire number of its members; not only is each limb or organ, however humble, as truly and indispensably a member of the body as any other, however apparently important or honorable; but the health and happiness of the whole absolutely depends on the welfare of each part. If disease or pain be suffered by a single member, whether more or less esteemed for its comeliness, the whole body feels the shock. ¶ *All the members suffer with it.* This is true in a twofold sense. Pain in a single member destroys the comfort of the whole body, as every one will acknowledge who ever endured rheumatism or toothache. Moreover, disease located in a single member, as in the hand or foot, if not arrested and cured, will affect the whole body, through the circulation of the blood, or otherwise. So

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles,

that, not only the present comfort of the whole body, but even its continued existence, depends more or less on the health of each part. ¶ *Or one member be honoured or glorified.* This is generally interpreted to mean, treated with more care, as in ver. 23, 24. The implied contrast would rather indicate health, soundness, vigor, as the interpretation of honored. The meaning would then be, if one member have the highest perfection of which it is capable. ¶ *All the members rejoice with it.* They share in the benefit. "If the hands, the feet, the heart, the lungs, the brain, be in a healthy condition, the advantage is felt by all the members, and all derive advantage from it." — *Barnes.* The argument is, that the members of Christ's mystical body, the church, are in like manner affected by the diseased or healthy state of each individual. Mutual care and watchfulness is therefore encouraged; envy and jealousy are discountenanced. See note on ver. 25.

27. *Now ye are the body of Christ, &c.* The illustration, ver. 12–26, is here applied to the subject under discussion. The application of its several parts has been anticipated in the foregoing notes. ¶ *And members in particular.* Christ is the head of the whole church, Col. i. 18; and each individual is a member of the general body. "In this short sentence, the apostle intimated to the Corinthians, that what he had said concerning the order, the situation, and the office, of the members of the human body, and the union which subsists among them, and the care which they have of each other, and concerning the perniciousness of dissensions among its members, was all applicable to the members of the church of Christ. They were therefore to attend to the things he had written, that there might be no envy among them, nor discontent, nor arrogant preferring of themselves be-

secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

fore others, but that in peace and love they might also promote each other's happiness." — *Macknight.*

28. *And God hath set, &c.* The expression is identical with that which occurs in ver. 18. The church, as the body, is organized according to the divine pleasure, and the appropriate service allotted to each member. The faculties or endowments, by which each member is fitted for service, is bestowed by God. None can boast as though he possessed anything which he had not received, ch. iv. 7. Nor is any one useless or despicable. ¶ *Some in the church.* That is, certain officers, or prominent men, who are endowed with special gifts. The principal jealousy in the Corinthian church existed in this class. Each regarded his gift as the most important, and undervalued others. The apostle proceeds to enumerate these, and intimates that, although some are higher than others, all are important and necessary to the general good of the whole, like the members of the human body. ¶ *First apostles.* The apostles are placed first in order, because they were the immediate representatives of our Lord, specially commissioned by him to be the teachers and governors of the church. ¶ *Secondarily prophets.* See note on Rom. xii. 6. ¶ *Thirdly teachers.* Third in rank. See note on Rom. xii. 7. ¶ *After that miracles.* Namely, the power of performing miracles. This gift is represented as next in importance, indicating the rank of him who had received it. See note on ver. 10. ¶ *Gifts of healings.* See note on ver. 9. ¶ *Helps, governments.* Various opinions have been entertained in reference to the two offices here indicated. Neither of the Greek words occurs elsewhere in the New Testament, and their meaning here is doubtful. Perhaps as reasonable a conjecture as any is, that by "help" is indicated a class of men, like the deacons, whose duty was to

29 *Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?*

30 *Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?*

31 *But covet earnestly the*

minister to the wants of the church, both temporal and spiritual; and by "governments," a class, like the presbyters, who were appointed to the oversight of particular branches of the church, with power to administer discipline. However this may be, the precise meaning is less important to us from the fact that these officers, like those of apostle and prophet, and the gifts of miracles, healings, and tongues, have long since ceased in the church. ¶ *Diversities of tongues.* See note on ver. 10.

29. *Are all apostles? &c.* In this verse and the next, the fact is implied that a perfect equality of endowment did not exist; and we may understand that if all possessed the endowments peculiar to any one class, except perhaps that of the apostles, and were destitute of those peculiar to the others, the church would suffer the inconvenience mentioned in ver. 17.

30. *Do all interpret?* See note on ver. 10.

31. *But covet earnestly the best gifts.* Literally, be zealous for the best gifts. Not necessarily those which were regarded as the most astonishing and most honorable, but those which were the most useful. Some understand the words as a declaration merely: "Ye do covet the best gifts." The original is capable of either translation; but the common version is more generally approved. It is as if he had said, "The humblest gifts are not to be despised; but still if you are to be envious of any, if you are to be desirous of acquiring any, desire not the worst, the most useless, but the best; such as the gift of prophesy, which conduces to the good of others. That such is the meaning appears from the parallel in ch. xiv. 1, where 'rather that ye may prophesy' corresponds to the best gifts here. That ζήλοῦτε must be

best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

CHAPTER XIII.

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of an-

taken in this ambiguous sense, is the natural inference from the use of the word in a bad sense in ch. xiii. 4. For a similar play on its good and bad senses, see Gal. iv. 17. They zealously affect you, but not well: — 'But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.' For this qualification of the general sentiment which he had been expressing just before, compare Matt. xxiii. 23: 'These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.' — Stanley. ¶ *And yet show I unto you a more excellent way.* That "more excellent way" is described in the next chapter, to which, indeed, this verse properly belongs. That way is *love*; without which all other spiritual gifts are comparatively valueless.

CHAPTER XIII.

In this chapter, the apostle describes one endowment, more valuable than any other spiritual gift whatever. The love here described is the very essence of Christianity, because it is the characteristic mark and result of a divine birth. 1 John iv. 7, 8. It is the fulfilment of the great commandment in the law. Matt. xxii. 36-40. If all men possessed it, they would no longer be envious and jealous of each other, nor strive for precedency in honor. This chapter may be divided into three sections; for in three different points of light the apostle exhibits his subject. (1.) In ver. 1-3, he shows that love is indispensable to true Christianity; that without it, the power to speak with tongues, to prophesy or instruct, to understand all mysteries and to grasp all knowledge, is comparatively valueless; and that faith which might remove mountains, the gift of worldly goods to the poor, and even martyrdom by fire, profit nothing unless inspired by love. (2.) In ver.

gels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

4-7, he enumerates some of the characteristics of love, or defines the nature of the grace which he calls the "more excellent," ch. xii. 31. (3.) In ver. 8-13, he illustrates the superiority of love over all other spiritual gifts, and declares it to be endless in duration. "The following triumphal song of pure love is doubly beautiful in the mouth of the apostle Paul. John the evangelist is elsewhere the bard of *love*, while Paul is rather the preacher of *faith*. This paragraph is a testimony to his new nature; in his old man Paul knew not the bloom of this love. His style changes; it relinquishes its dialectic form for a simplicity, smoothness, and transparent depth, which approaches that of John." — *Olshausen*.

1. *Though I speak with the tongues of men.* Though I might speak in all the languages used by men. The "gift of tongues" was doubtless a very important endowment, as thereby the preachers of the gospel were enabled to communicate the truth to foreigners. Yet some of the Corinthians seem to have overvalued this gift, and even to have used it through ostentation, rather than for profit, ch. xiv. 10-19. Its possession was the object of pride in some, and of envy in others. The apostle strikes at the root of the whole difficulty, by showing that this gift is of incomparably less value than love, which is equally opposed to pride and to envy. ¶ *And of angels.* Paul was once "caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for men to utter." 2 Cor. xii. 4. It is not improbable that he here alludes to that event, and refers to those "words" as the language of angels. ¶ *And have not charity.* And have not *love*. This is the proper meaning of the word; and it is almost uniformly so translated, except in this chapter. It is the same word which occurs in 1 John iv. 8, 16, to indicate the nature of God; and it here indicates that grace which makes men resemble God. It may be observed, that

2 And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge;

the apostle in this chapter, certainly in his description of love in ver. 4-7, speaks of love to men rather than of love to God. "There is no reason to doubt that he meant also to include in the general term love to God, or love in general. His illustrations, however, are chiefly drawn from the effects of love towards men. It properly means, love to the whole church, love to the whole world, love to all creatures, which arises from true piety, and which centres ultimately in God." — *Barnes*. ¶ *I am become.* I am. Such is my condition. The apostle speaks in the first person, making himself a representative of the condition hypothetically described. As if he had said, however abundant may be my spiritual gifts, they are unprofitable to me if I am destitute of love; and the same holds true of all others. ¶ *As sounding brass.* This is understood to denote a trumpet, or other brazen instrument, through which a great noise may be made, though itself be destitute of vitality. Thus the power to speak all languages would be unprofitable, unless the speaker were vitalized by the spirit of love. He would be like the brazen instrument, which received no benefit from the blasts which were blown through it. ¶ *Or a tinkling cymbal.* Rather a clanging cymbal; for the noise produced by striking the cymbal is better thus expressed. The noise may affect others, but does not benefit the cymbal. It is to be observed that the apostle speaks, in ver. 1-3, solely of personal benefit, not of that which others may derive. Soldiers may be animated in battle by the blast of a trumpet or the clangor of the cymbals; but the instruments are lifeless and incapable of benefit. Equally incapable of spiritual benefit from the richest endowments is every one who is destitute of a loving spirit.

2. *And though I have the gift of prophecy.* See note on Rom. xii. 6. This gift was more highly valued by Paul than the gift of tongues or of miracles. See ch. xiv. 1. But even this was un-

and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow

profitable without love. Having mentioned the gift most highly esteemed by the Corinthians, ver. 1, he adds that which he regarded as superior to others, and places both in the same category. ¶ *And understand all mysteries.* By *mysteries* the apostle probably refers to the doctrines of grace, which, until the advent of Christ had been hidden from the world, but had now been revealed. See note on ch. ii. 7. These doctrines were not mysterious because incomprehensible; they might be easily understood when once revealed. Such mysteries, even the "hidden wisdom" of God, had been revealed, and had been proclaimed in Corinth and elsewhere by the apostle. ¶ *And all knowledge.* The most extensive knowledge of things both divine and human, if we understand knowledge to indicate something beyond the comprehension of mysteries or revealed truth. "Though I knew everything. Though I were acquainted fully with all the doctrines of religion, and with all the arts and sciences." — *Barnes.* From the structure of the sentence, it would seem that the understanding of mysteries and the possession of knowledge were essential to the gift of prophecy mentioned in this verse. Hence it may the more confidently be concluded, that, by prophesying, the apostle does not here mean the foretelling of future events, but the instructing of the people in those things necessary to their peace and welfare. ¶ *And though I have all faith.* Though I have the highest degree of faith. ¶ *So that I could remove mountains.* See Matt. xvii. 20. Even such strong faith as this is not all which the Christian needs. ¶ *I am nothing.* I am none the better for all these gifts, unless they be sanctified by love. Though I may benefit others by instructing them, though I may convince them by miracles wrought through the power of faith, yet if I lack the fundamental principle of Christianity, the

all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

principle on which the divine government is exercised, the principle which assimilates humanity to divinity, I am to be accounted as nothing; I have no claim to be regarded as a Christian. See note on Rom. viii. 9.

3. *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.* Though I make myself useful as possible to the poor, by distributing all my property for the relief of their necessities. This is ordinarily regarded as an evidence of good-will and affection to the poor; yet it may be done merely to be seen of men. Matt. vi. 2. We have here additional proof that the apostle's theme in this chapter is not what is ordinarily denominated *charity*, but rather that living principle of love which underlies all true charity, and without which the giver is not profited. ¶ *And though I give my body to be burned.* As a martyr to the truth. There is no evidence that this particular kind of martyrdom had as yet been endured by the disciples of Christ, though it became painfully common at a later period. Martyrdom in other forms, however, had even then been endured. Paul himself, while an unbeliever, had been present and consenting, at one such tragedy at least. Acts vii. 58; viii. 1. This was regarded, and properly, as the highest pledge of sincerity. ¶ *It profiteth me nothing.* I derive no real advantage from distributing my goods or sacrificing my life, unless the spirit of love dwell in my heart. The whole duty of man is comprised in love to God and love to men. Nothing short of this constitutes a true Christian, or furnishes evidence that one has been born of God. 1 John iv. 7.

4. Having declared the importance of love, the apostle here commences to describe its nature and operation. It is observable that in every point described, its prevalence would remove the strifes and contentions, the envy

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

ings and jealousies, the ambitious pretensions and supercilious behavior, which abounded in the Corinthian church, and against which a large portion of this epistle is directed. "Love disposes one to bear injuries long."—*Macknight*. "Love is long-suffering."—*Conybeare*. Long-suffering is one of the characteristics of divine love, Rom. ii. 4; ix. 22; 1 Pet. iii. 20; 2 Pet. iii. 15; of the love of Christ, 1 Tim. i. 16; and is often enforced as a Christian duty, 2 Cor. vi. 6; Gal. v. 22; Eph. iv. 2; Col. iii. 12; 2 Tim. iii. 10; iv. 2. ¶ *And is kind*. "Hatred prompts to harshness, severity, unkindness of expression, anger, and a desire of revenge. But love is the reverse of all these. A man who truly loves another will be *kind* to him, desirous of doing him good; will be gentle, not severe and harsh; will be courteous, because he desires his happiness, and would not pain his feelings."—*Barnes*. Kindness also is a divine attribute, flowing from love; for God "is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." Luke vi. 35; and to imitate him, Christians are exhorted to cultivate the same grace. Eph. iv. 32. ¶ *Charity envieth not*. Is not *zealous* in a bad sense. The original word denotes an ardent desire, either for or against any person or thing. See note on ch. xii. 31. That love which the gospel requires is utterly inconsistent with *envy*, against either friend or foe. Matt. v. 44, 45; xxii. 39. If we truly love others as we love ourselves, we shall rejoice in their prosperity as in our own; we shall not envy them the enjoyment of any gift, or grace, or possession. The exercise of this grace, however, is not inconsistent with a desire that privileges and advantages should be enjoyed by the most worthy, those who make the best use of them; nor with all lawful endeavors to wrest them from the unworthy and to bestow them in such a manner as to promote the public welfare. Such is the divine

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

administration, and it betokens no envy, properly speaking. Matt. xxi. 43. This is altogether different from the envious disposition, which, regardless of worth or demerit, repines at another's prosperity, and is mortified discontented, and fretful, on account of his real or supposed superiority. ¶ *Charity vaunteth not itself*. True love is equally inconsistent with envying superiors and with boasting over inferiors. Love regards the happiness of all, and would not diminish it, by taunting them with their imperfections. ¶ *Is not puffed up*. See note on ch. iv. 6. Love to God as a universal Father, and to mankind as a universal brotherhood, children of the same Father, recipients of the same love, and heirs to the same inheritance, never exhibits itself in the form of pride.

5. *Doth not behave itself unseemly*. "Love is never uncourteous."—*Conybeare*. "It doth not act indecently."—*Pearce*. Love induces a proper respect for the common courtesies and decencies of life. It prompts a suitable deference to superiors and a proper regard for the rights and the feelings of inferiors; it is neither rebellious nor servile to the one class, nor overbearing to the other. ¶ *Seeketh not her own*. Is not selfish. Love seeks not personal pleasure or profit at the expense of injury to others. Doubtless it is the right and the duty of every man to love himself and to seek his own good. To this principle are addressed all the arguments to follow virtue because it leads to peace, and to avoid vice because it produces misery. Love to self is made the measure of love to others, in the great commandment, Matt. xxii. 39. But that selfish spirit which disregards the rights and the happiness of others, which seeks its own benefit by means destructive to the welfare of others, is what is here represented as inconsistent with Christian love. If we truly love others as we love ourselves, we shall desire their good as our own,

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

and would no more willingly injure them than injure ourselves. ¶ *Is not easily provoked.* "Some limitation may seem necessary, and with that view our common version inserts *easily*. Doddridge and Newcome, however, rather suppose some stronger sense intended than being provoked, namely, is 'not hurried into high irritation, exasperation, or outrageous anger.' But as there is evidently a limitation to be made in the words immediately preceding, there is surely no reason why there should not in this. It seems to have reference to the provocation occasioned by attempts to overreach."—*Bloomfield.* ¶ *Thinketh no evil.* Some men are disposed to attribute even the good actions of others to bad motives, and bad actions to the worst motives. Such a spirit is inconsistent with true love, which rather apologizes for the misdeeds of others, attributing them to a mistaken view of right rather than to an absolutely evil design. Love is not censorious or malicious; it seeks not to imagine or to represent others in a darker hue than is necessary; it is disposed rather to put the best construction on the actions of others, and to believe that no evil was designed.

6. *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* Or, in goodness, justice, virtue, as contrasted with iniquity. "All these qualities express the sympathy, and self-denial of love for others. Injustice and justice are here personified as well as love, and the sense is, 'she has no pleasure in the advance of wickedness, but she shares the joy of the triumph of goodness.' Compare 3 John 4."—*Stanley.* Knowing that iniquity overwhelms men in sorrow, while the obedient are rewarded in their deed, Jas. 1. 25, love has no pleasure in the sinfulness of others, nor finds satisfaction in their sufferings; but rather sympathizes in the joy which they experience as the fruit of well-doing. Love regards the welfare of all, and rejoices in every triumph of virtue over vice, righteous-

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

ness over iniquity, grace over sin, happiness over misery, and life over death.

7. *Beareth all things.* "Forbears in all things."—*Conybeare.* The same word is translated *suffer* in ch. ix. 12. Some, from the etymology of the word, suppose the meaning to be, that love is disposed to cover or conceal the faults of others, and not to proclaim them to the world. Others understand that love is forbearing, patient, slow to anger, and ready to forgive. In either sense, the meaning is evidently that love seeks no revenge, but chooses that the errors and faults of others, so far as is consistent with the safety and welfare of the community, should be overlooked and forgiven. ¶ *Believeth all things, hopeth all things.* These terms "denote such a spirit of candor as is disposed to believe and hope the best of others, as far as facts and circumstances permit."—*Bloomfield.* Love induces us to put the best possible construction on the acts and motives of others, and to hope for the best. It makes us willing to believe that there may be some justification of what appears wrong to us; that there may be extenuating circumstances which have not yet come to our knowledge; that the transaction may be explained consistently with the principles of right and justice. It hopes for this, until compelled, by irresistible proof to the contrary, to abandon hope. It seems scarcely necessary to add, that a man, under the influence of love, is not necessarily credulous, believing not only without evidence, but contrary to evidence. The language must be understood, like all other general expressions, with the limitations required by the subject under discussion. ¶ *Endureth all things.* Is not overcome by the misconduct of others. Endures opposition and even abuse. The parent continues to love the disobedient child. Our Saviour, while on the cross, gave evidence that love was not extinguished in his heart; for he then prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers. Luke xxiii. 34.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there*

be tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

God loves his sinful and rebellious children, and manifests his love, not only in the common blessings of life, but in the provisions made for their final and perfect salvation from sin. Matt. v. 45; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 10. Such is the nature of pure Christian love. It endures all trials and discouragements. It strives to promote the happiness of all, even those who "oppose themselves," and are unthankful and evil. If it can do nothing more, it offers a fervent prayer to God that he will have mercy on them, save them from sin, turn them away from iniquity, and purify their hearts. The following remarks on ver. 4-7, are worthy of consideration: — "Paul now describes the characteristics of love in a series of fifteen expressions. The two first indicate its nature in general; then succeeds a series of negative qualities, whereby the conduct of the Corinthians is shown to be entirely at issue with real love; and then certain positive characteristics follow, presenting before them a picture of the true life. The subject is love in the abstract, not the person exercising it, because it never presents itself in a perfect concrete manifestation; even the best can be supposed only to make some approach to its absolute nature." — *Olshausen*. In regard to mere men, the closing remark is doubtless true. Yet there has been one "concrete manifestation" of this spirit. It was fully illustrated in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, who also "suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps." 1 Pet. ii. 21.

8. Here commences the third division under which the apostle treats his general theme. Love is shown to be superior to all other gifts, because, while those serve only a temporary purpose, this never ceases, but blooms perennially in the regions of immortal purity. ¶ *Charity never faileth*. Never ceases to exist. The expression might mean that love is adapted to all the possible circumstances of life, and

may be continually exercised. But the context denotes a wider and more important meaning; namely, that love is not confined to this life which now is, but that it shall continue through eternity, as the brightest flower in heaven. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John iv. 16. It is impossible to conceive of higher blessedness than results from perfect love to God and to all his children. Whether such love could contemplate unmoved and undisturbed the endless misery of any of its objects, is a question which demands more attention than many have bestowed upon it. ¶ *But whether there be prophecies*. The reference is to the spiritual gift, enabling men to preach the truth of God distinctly and intelligibly; or even to predict future events; though it is doubtful whether the latter idea is here included. See note on Rom. xii. 6. ¶ *They shall fail*. They shall cease. There will be no need of prophecy or instruction by human instrumentality in heaven. When men know even as they are known, ver. 12, there will be no need of further instruction, or warning, or exhortation. ¶ *Whether there be tongues*. See note on ver. 1. ¶ *They shall cease*. Some suppose the apostle to mean that the gift of tongues should cease in the church, after the object for which it was bestowed had been accomplished. That it has already thus ceased, is very true. Yet the context indicates a different interpretation of this passage. There will be no more need of various tongues than of prophecy in heaven; and for a similar reason the gift will be discontinued. It is safe to believe that all will equally understand the language of heaven, whatever that may be. ¶ *Whether there be knowledge*. See note on ver. 2. From what follows, in ver. 9, 10, it is manifest that the reference here is to the limited, partial knowledge, which even the wisest can attain on earth, or, as some suppose, to the spiritual "gift" by which such knowledge was

9 For we know in part, and
 have prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is

communicated to the mind. The most extensive knowledge, whether attained by study, or received by revelation, however sufficient it may be for present purposes, falls far short of perfection. ¶ *It shall vanish away.* It shall become invisible, in comparison with what shall hereafter be revealed. As the stars fade and disappear when the sun pours its flood of light over the earth, so the full blaze of truth in heaven will obscure the feebler rays by which we are now guided. There is no loss of light in either case. The stars still shine; and whatever of truth is now known will remain true; but in both cases, the less is absorbed in the greater, and vanisheth out of sight, because so diminutive in proportion to the whole. "The essential idea in this passage is, that all the knowledge which we now possess shall lose its effulgence, be dimmed and lost in the superior light of heaven. But love shall live there; and we should, therefore, seek that which is permanent and eternal." — *Barnes.* All else, in comparison with this, is of little value.

9. *For we know in part.* That is, only in part. It is said of Sir Isaac Newton, whose scientific attainments have immortalized his name, that he compared himself to a child, wandering by the sea-shore and pleased with the pebbles thrown up by its waves, but ignorant of the secrets contained in its vast bosom. Alike imperfect is all human knowledge. The rudiments of truth may be grasped; but many of its great secrets are yet unsolved. This fact is graphically illustrated in ver. 11, 12. ¶ *And we prophesy in part.* Even the prophetic gift, whether understood as the power to predict future events, or, as is more probable in this place, the ability to instruct and exhort others in regard to religious truth and duty, is limited. It extends sufficiently for the present welfare of men, but falls far short of absolute perfection. The inspired servants of God did not claim perfect insight, nor ability to teach all truth.

perfect is come, then that which
 is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I

Paul acknowledges his deficiency here, and elsewhere; so also does that disciple "whom Jesus loved," John xiii. 23, and who received special tokens of confidence, 1 John iii. 2. Even the master of both, and of us all, unto whom "God giveth not the Spirit by measure," John iii. 34, makes a similar acknowledgment, Mark xiii. 32.

10. *But when that which is perfect is come, &c.* Imperfect knowledge or ability to teach will be superseded by that which is perfect. In heaven, when God's own light shall illumine the soul, and enable it to comprehend all truth, the partial glimpses before enjoyed will cease. We shall no longer know "in part," or imperfectly, but perfectly. It will be as when the dim star-light becomes imperceptible at noon-day.

11. *When I was a child.* The word *νήπιος* denotes a babe, and is generally so translated; the precise age is not indicated, but the context implies ability to speak. This comparison seems to be suggested by the use of the word "perfect" in the previous verse. The perfection of manhood is contrasted with the imperfection of childhood, as an illustration of the subject under discussion. "The several words used have a perceptible though remote reference to the three gifts just before mentioned. The gift of tongues shall be as the feeble articulations of an infant; — the gift of prophecy and discernment of spirits shall be as an infant's half-formed thoughts; — the gift of knowledge shall be as the infant's half-formed reasonings." — *Stanley.*

¶ *I spake as a child.* Namely, in a broken and imperfect manner. ¶ *I understood as a child.* My conception of ideas and of objects was feeble and indistinct. ¶ *I thought as a child.* Or, reasoned as a child. Namely, in a vague, inconclusive manner. ¶ *I put away childish things.* In manhood, my speech and my powers of conception and reasoning so far exceeded those of childhood, that I had no further occasion for such imperfect processes as led

spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through

only to imperfect results. The point of the illustration is, that the heavenly state is so highly superior to the earthly, that the powers and attainments which are so useful and so highly valued here, will there be unserviceable in comparison with the higher perfection enjoyed. Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge, as they now exist, shall vanish away, being superseded by the heavenly illumination which shall then pervade the heart.

12. The same fact is illustrated by a different figure. Truth, seen through an obscure medium, is less perfect in its proportions, than when distinctly perceived. When it shall be clearly manifested in heaven, there will be no further need of the imperfect means now used for its apprehension or communication. ¶ *For now we see through a glass.* Or a mirror. "Among the ancients, glass was not brought to that perfection in which we have it at present; objects seen through it were not seen very distinctly, and it is not certain that even so clear a medium as glass is meant here; for thin plates of horn, transparent stone, and the like, were made use of by the ancients in their windows, that they might receive the rays of light (without the wind) through them; and whatsoever they could thus see through was called *εσποτρον* the term used in the text. — *Pearce*. Some understand a mirror, of glass, or of some highly burnished metal, by which objects were reflected. "By the reflection of a mirror." — *Conybear*. "Now we see by reflected light, indistinctly." — *Haweis*. ¶ *Darkly*. Literally, *in an enigma*, or as it stands in the margin "in a riddle." The manifest idea is, imperfectly, obscurely. Whatever may be true of the very finest specimens, it is a general fact that glass is not absolutely clear; and that objects seen through it, or by reflection, are more or less distorted in appearance. We do not thus obtain a

a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith,

perfectly accurate impression. So the knowledge attainable by all our present helps is obscure and enigmatical, compared with that which will be disclosed by the clear light of heaven. And when that light shall shine into our hearts, we shall no longer need such imperfect mediums as are now serviceable. ¶ *But then face to face*. Clearly, distinctly, accurately; without the intervention of any medium which can either obscure or distort. ¶ *Now I know in part*. See note on ver. 9. ¶ *But then shall I know even as also I am known*. Knowledge shall then be clear, distinct, and absolute. Of course, we are not to understand that omniscience will be granted to men, even in heaven. But all things which concern their peace and welfare shall be distinctly perceived. They will stand "face to face" with eternal realities, and will see them in the same manner that themselves are seen. "Now my knowledge of spiritual things is partial; but in the life to come I shall fully know them, even as I am fully known of superior beings." — *Macknight*. "Divine truths are at present seen by us but obscurely and imperfectly. Our knowledge of God, of his nature and properties, of the scheme of his Providence and the method of his government, is short and incomplete. But in heaven we shall not be less wise than happy; we shall then know many things which are now in a great measure hidden from us; we shall know them as we ourselves are known of God, that is, clearly and perfectly." — *Jortin*.

13. *And now abideth, &c.* Or, remaineth. Commentators differ in opinion concerning the import of this phrase. Some understand that faith, hope, and love, shall endure together forever; that to whatever height of felicity souls may be advanced, they will not only love with a divine fervor, but will cherish faith and hope for

hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

further advancement. Others, apparently more in accordance with the context, conceive that of love only can it be truly said that it "never faileth," ver. 8. The argument implied in ver. 8-13 certainly is, that love is more important and indispensable, and that it should therefore be more desirable, than any other spiritual gift, because all others should fail and vanish away, while this would endure forever. And although it is not so distinctly stated, it is sufficiently obvious, that for the same reason love is greater than faith or hope. "Now faith, hope, and love, these three together, exist in the present scene *only*; but in the future world faith and hope will be done away, and therefore the greatest of these is love, meaning universal benevolence." — *Bloomfield*. "Seeing 'faith is the persuasion of things hoped for,' Heb. xi. 1, and 'hope that is seen is not hope,' Rom. viii. 24, in heaven, where all the objects of our faith and hope are put in our possession, there can be no place for either. It is quite otherwise with love. The objects of love exist in the greatest perfection in heaven, and will exist there forever; so that love will burn in that world, with a delightful warmth and brightness, to all eternity." — *Macknight*.

The surpassing beauty and importance of this chapter has caused it to be regarded by many as a separate, independent discourse, so to speak, without special connection with what precedes or follows. On the contrary, it is immediately connected with both, and bears directly on the discussion of "spiritual gifts," ch. xii. 1. Its design was to allay the dissensions which existed at Corinth concerning the relative importance of those "gifts." Having shown that, as all the gifts were bestowed by one God, and were the different manifestations of the same spirit, there ought to be no jealousy or envying between brethren, the apostle here describes a gift "more

CHAPTER XIV.

FOLLOW after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but

excellent" than all, which, if they possessed and cultivated it, would effectually banish all strife and contention, unite them in the bonds of affection, make them to rejoice in each other's honor and usefulness, and give them a foretaste of heaven. At the same time, by his incidental remarks concerning the transitory nature of other gifts, in contrast with the perpetual duration of love, he exhibits the folly of making them the subject of envy and strife. Far better might they strive for that grace which would promote their happiness and peace here, and would be their crown of mutual rejoicing and glory hereafter.

CHAPTER XIV.

In this chapter, the apostle reaches the point to which his previous argument has tended; namely, that among the "spiritual gifts," that of "prophesying" was more valuable, because more useful, than that of "tongues," which was more extraordinary, and more highly regarded by the Corinthians. While it was improper and unchristian, to be "puffed up" on account of their "gifts," or to despise those who were not so conspicuously endowed, it was nevertheless consistent with that most excellent grace described in ch. xiii., that they should desire such gifts as might enable them to advance the happiness of others. To show how abundantly "prophecy" exceeds "tongues," in this respect, the apostle declares that this alone tends to edification, ver. 2-5; that no teacher could be useful, unless he were understood, ver. 6-11; that, for this purpose, "tongues" had need to be interpreted, ver. 12-19; that "tongues" were designed more to arouse attention than to convey instruction, ver. 20-22; that confusion would result from the too free use of tongues, ver. 23-25; that this should be avoided by a decent and orderly exercise of the "gift," ver. 26-33. The chapter closes with certain direc-

rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no

tions concerning women, and others, and an exhortation to preserve order in all things.

1. *Follow after charity.* Cherish love in your hearts, as the choicest gift of God. Check every passion and emotion which is inconsistent with it, and foster everything which may promote its growth. Strive to imitate the Lord Jesus, who exhibited a perfect example of this grace. ¶ *And desire spiritual gifts.* See note on ch. xii. 31, the sentiment of which verse is here repeated, after the glowing description of the "more excellent way" in ch. xiii. Paul would not have it forgotten that *love* was the brightest jewel of Christianity; yet he does not discountenance the desire for "spiritual gifts" which might be exercised for the benefit of mankind. ¶ *But rather that ye may prophesy.* Or, especially, or chiefly, that ye may prophesy or teach unto edification. See note on Rom. xii. 6. The comparison suggested by *rather*, or especially, is not between love and prophecy, as if men should desire to prophesy rather than to abound in love; but between the gift of "prophecy" and other "spiritual gifts," this should be desired in preference to any other, for reasons assigned in the succeeding verses. As the Corinthians were so excessively vain of the gift of tongues, and ostentatiously displayed it in season and out of season, ver. 23, the apostle enters the more fully into the discussion of the actual preference among "spiritual gifts."

2. *An unknown tongue.* There is nothing in the Greek answering to *unknown*, which word was supplied by the translators; and such is the fact throughout the whole chapter. The meaning, however, is well expressed; namely, a tongue or language not known by the hearer, and of course not understood. Probably every language spoken under the influence of

man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to edifica-*

this gift was an existing language, known and understood by some nation, ver. 10; but if none were present who understood the language, it might properly be called unknown. When this gift was first bestowed, there were present a great multitude from various nations, of various tongues; each understood his own language, and the effect was as described in ver. 22. See Acts. ii. 1-13. ¶ *Speaketh not unto men, &c.* That is, no man, to whom the tongue is "unknown," can understand him; and he conveys no distinct idea to the hearer. ¶ *But unto God.* It is as if he addressed God only, for God alone can understand what he says. In such case, the apostle advises to "keep silence in the church" and to hold mental communion with God, ver. 28. ¶ *Howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.* See note on ch. ii. 7. Nevertheless, the truths which he utters may be important, and would be profitable to others if understood. Some understand "in the spirit" to mean, under the influence of the divine spirit; others say "it must signify, in his own mind, or in his own spirit."—*Pearce*. So also *Newcome*, *Bloomfield*, and others.

3. *But he that prophesieth.* See note on Rom. xii. 6. ¶ *Speaketh unto men.* Addresses them in language which they can understand. This is the specific difference between the "gift of tongues" and the prophetic gift, which renders the latter more useful and desirable. By the help of either, the same truths may be uttered; if understood, the hearers are profited, otherwise not. See ver. 2. ¶ *To edification.* To the building up or strengthening of the church, and its individual members. ¶ *And exhortation.* The application of the truth to the conscience, and the enforcement of its requirements. See note on Rom. vii. 8. ¶ *And comfort.* The gospel, rightly understood, affords unspeakable comfort to the soul, under

tion, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that

all the circumstances of life, both by its animating promises, which inspire the most cheerful hopes, and by its precepts, which guide us in the way of peace. Whoso addresses men on this subject intelligibly, and teaches the truth revealed by the Spirit, administers to their edification and comfort.

4. *Edifieth himself.* If he understand the truth which is veiled from others by an unknown language, his own soul may be strengthened in faith, and his own hopes may be confirmed; but the benefit will not extend to them who do not understand him, ver. 2. ¶ *Edifieth the church.* By communicating important truths in a language which they do understand, he shares the benefit with the church.

5. *I would that ye all spake with tongues, &c.* As the gift is good in itself, and under certain circumstances may be of vast service, I would rejoice if it were possessed by every Christian. I do not disparage that gift; I only desire that you should not consider it superior to prophesy, which is, in fact, of more practical value. ¶ *For greater is he that prophesieth, &c.* He is more serviceable to the church, and his labors are more useful. As far, therefore, as rank depends on usefulness, the prophet is greater or higher in rank than he who possesses the more extraordinary gift of tongues. ¶ *Except he interpret, &c.* Unless he explain, in intelligible language, what is first uttered in an unknown tongue, ver. 13, so that the hearers may understand. In such case, the gift of tongues coupled with that of interpretation, might be greater than that of prophecy; otherwise, prophecy must be accounted the greater.

6. *Now, brethren, if I come unto you.* Having already stated the abstract

ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except

truth, as to the relative importance of these gifts, Paul illustrates it by example, and inquires what profit could be derived even from apostolic communications, unless they were understood by the hearers. ¶ *Speaking with tongues.* That is, tongues which you do not understand, as the course of the argument evidently indicates. That the apostle possessed this gift, in an eminent degree, he asserts in ver. 18; but he was not accustomed to use it for mere show, and preferred to address his hearers in language with which they were familiar, ver. 19. ¶ *Either by revelation, &c.* The precise import of this passage is not easily ascertained. Commentators have freely acknowledged the difficulty. "It is perhaps of no great necessity to be over-curious; it being enough, for the understanding the sense and argument of the apostle here, to know that these terms stand for some intelligible discourse, tending to the edification of the church, though of what kind each of them was, in particular, we certainly know not."—*Locke.* Among the various conjectures, the following seems quite as probable as any:—that by *revelation* is to be understood bringing to light what was before hidden, as by interpreting the words spoken in an unknown tongue; by *knowledge*, insight into divine truth, communicated in an intelligible form; by *prophesying*, addressing the church, through interpretation, or otherwise, in the manner usually adopted by those who spake under the prophetic impulse; and by *doctrine*, truth communicated in some easily understood manner, as by the ordinary instructors. "The sense of this passage, therefore, is clear. Though Paul should utter among them, as he had abundant ability to do, the most weighty and important truths, yet un-

I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe

or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an

less he interpreted what he said in a manner clear from obscurity, like revelation; or intelligibly, and so as to constitute knowledge; or in the manner that the prophets spoke, in a plain and intelligible manner; or in the manner usual in simple and plain instruction; it would be useless."—*Barnes*. Another view of the subject may be worthy of consideration. In ver. 2, the apostle says that he who utters language not understood "speaketh not unto men;" and in ver. 3, that the prophet who utters intelligible language "speaketh unto men." May we not properly understand the phrase, "except I shall speak to you," in this verse, in a similar sense? namely, unless I shall so speak that you can comprehend my meaning. If this view be correct, we may understand the passage thus: If I address you in unknown tongues, I shall not profit you, unless, by interpretation, or otherwise, I shall enable you to understand distinctly what I say, either by way of revelation, or knowledge, or prophecy, or doctrine. In other words, whatever the character of my communications in unknown tongues may be, they will do you no good, "except I shall speak to you," by actually communicating my thoughts to your minds, in some intelligible manner.

7. *And even things without life giving sound.* Musical instruments, such as are enumerated here and in ver. 8. ¶ *Whether pipe.* An ancient wind instrument, somewhat resembling a flageolet in form, generally made of reeds. ¶ *Or harp.* A stringed instrument, substantially like the modern harp; but of various sizes and forms. The pipe and harp are said to have been "the only two kinds of instrumental music known in Greece," in the apostolic age. ¶ *Except they give a distinction in the sounds, &c.* "There is evidently an allusion to those various

and strongly marked characteristics, which among the ancients distinguished different kinds of music, whether sacred, domestic, dramatic, or military; inasmuch that any person, with a tolerable ear, could tell to what class to refer any composition which he heard. Whereas, if those characteristics were not observed in the air, he would not know what the tune was meant to be; whether, as we should say, a march, or a waltz. This, then, seems to be what the apostle means; as is plain from the words following which contain another illustration of the same kind, but more perspicuous, and serving to explain the preceding."—*Bloomfield*. Others understand such a distinction of sounds, as to their length and the intervals between them, and their tones with reference to the key-note, as should produce not only melody, but a distinct tune, without reference to different classes of tunes. In either case, the idea is manifest, that the hearer could not understand the design of the musician, unless the design was manifested by some intelligible "distinction in the sounds."

8. *For if the trumpet.* A familiar instrument of great antiquity, ordinarily made of brass, but sometimes of silver. It was used by the Jews in their temple-service, and it is even now sometimes used in the more elaborate sacred music. But it has chiefly been devoted to military purposes, as its sharp, shrill blasts can be so easily distinguished amid the roar of battle. ¶ *Give an uncertain sound.* The trumpet has a language of its own; certain notes upon it being understood to direct a charge; others, a deliberate advance; others, a retreat; and so of the rest. An uncertain sound is one not distinctly indicating any movement, or in other words, not intelligible to a body of soldiers. ¶ *Who shall prepare himself to the battle?* A single instance is selected as an exam-

uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

ple. Unless the signal were understood, soldiers could not know what particular duty was required. The application of this reference to musical instruments, is distinctly stated in ver. 9.

9. *So likewise ye, &c.* In like manner ye fail to communicate your ideas unless you speak intelligibly. As none can distinguish a tune unless there be "a distinction in the sounds," or understand the signal given by the trumpet unless it be a certain, definite, established sound, so neither can men comprehend your meaning, "except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood," or language with which they are familiar. ¶ *For ye shall speak into the air.* This figure is similar to that in ch. ix. 26. The idea is, your words are wasted. You might as well speak when there are none to hear, as when there are none who can understand.

10. *There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world.* "There are, no doubt, as many kinds of languages used in the world as ye speak." — *Macknight.* A possible objection is anticipated, that the use of tongues is proper, because each of the languages spoken has an actual existence and signification, to which the answer follows in ver. 11. Be it so, says the apostle; very likely there are so many languages. ¶ *And none of them is without signification.* "None formed of inarticulate sounds, but adapted to be significant to the persons who use it." — *Bloomfield.*

11. *If I know not the meaning of the voice.* If the language be ever so real, and significant to those who are

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore let him that

accustomed to it, ver. 10, yet if I do not understand its meaning, ¶ *I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian.* — See note on Acts xxviii. 2. The Greeks styled all barbarians, who spoke a foreign language. I shall be to the speaker as a foreigner, and he as a foreigner to me. I cannot understand his meaning, nor he mine; we are unintelligible to each other, and can neither impart nor receive instruction. This is a conclusive answer to the implied objection in ver. 10.

12. *Even so ye.* In like manner; or for the same reason. That is, because when you speak with tongues to them who do not know their signification, you will be as barbarians or foreigners. ¶ *Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts.* Since ye ardently desire special endowments. In what follows, it is intimated that their anxiety for such gifts was prompted by their desire to excel others. See note on ch. xii. 31. Whether their desire for superior excellence was selfish or otherwise, the apostle points out the method by which such excellence would become most useful and honorable. ¶ *Seek that ye may excel, &c.* Not in speaking tongues which none understand, but in communicating truth in a plain and intelligible manner to the church. This is equivalent to "rather that ye may prophesy," ver. 1. One method by which this result might be obtained is mentioned in the next verse.

13. *Pray that he may interpret.* It would seem that the gift of "divers kinds of tongues" and that of "the interpretation of tongues," ch. xii. 10, were not always bestowed on the same

speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but

person. The apostles probably possessed both; but of others particularly favored, some enjoyed one gift, some another. Paul has already shown that the gift of tongues, though more highly regarded than any other by the Corinthians, was utterly useless for the purpose of instruction, when not understood. He now directs those who possess the gift, how they may make it available to "the edifying of the church," ver. 12. Let him pray for ability to interpret whatever he may be moved to speak in an unknown tongue; that is, to announce the same truth in familiar language.

14. *For if I pray, &c.* It has been supposed by some that "unknown tongues" were almost exclusively manifested in devotional exercises, such as prayer and praise. See ver. 15. However this may have been at the date of this epistle, there is nothing in the account of the first manifestation of this gift, Acts ii. 1-13, which naturally leads to such a conclusion. The apostle selects these exercises as an example, to illustrate the less real value of this gift compared with the gift of prophecy. ¶ *My spirit prayeth.* *Spirit* seems here to indicate the emotional nature, the affections, in contrast with the intelligent, the mental nature, expressed by *understanding*. If I truly pray, whatever language my lips may utter, my heart is moved, my emotions and religious feelings are excited, and thus I derive profit, even though I do not understand the language which I speak. "The consciousness of ecstasy and communion with God would have an elevating effect, independently of any impression produced on the understanding."—*Stanley*. See note on Rom. viii. 26, where the apostle describes prayer without the use of any words. ¶ *My understanding.* My mind; my intellect. ¶ *Is unfruitful.* "Is without fruit to the persons for whom I pray."—*MacKnight*. In this interpretation most

my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will

commentators substantially agree. Yet it seems to me not fully to express the apostle's meaning. There is a manifest dependence of this verse upon the preceding, where those who use "tongues" are exhorted to pray for ability to interpret. The consequence resulting from the lack of such ability is here stated, which may be paraphrased thus:—For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prays and is refreshed, whether I understand and can interpret my words or not; but if my mind comprehend not their meaning, so that I can interpret or explain, then it is unfruitful of good to others, and they are not edified. See ver. 2, 17. The possibility of speaking with tongues which the speaker himself neither understood nor could interpret, seems to be embraced in this verse, as well as in ver. 13.

15. *What is it then?* What follows? What is to be done? What is the practical result? "It indicates the conclusion to which the reasoning had conducted him, or the course which he would pursue in view of all the circumstances of the case."—*Barnes*. ¶ *I will pray, &c.* Here, as in ver. 6, the apostle uses the first person, indicating the course proper to be pursued by any person in the exercise of spiritual gifts, precisely as he uses the second person in ver. 16. He speaks not of what is proper in one only, but states a rule applicable to all. "I will pray" should be understood "I will endeavor to pray," or "I desire to pray." "Some ancient and almost all the early modern expositors (together with Hammond, Whitby, Rosenmüller, Krause, and Iaspis) suppose the sense to be this: The best to be done is to ask God to be endued with the faculty of divinely-inspired prayer in a foreign language; not with the spirit and soul alone, and to our own edification only, but with *meaning*, so as to be understood by others also, that is, that we

pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16 Else, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy

giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

may have, too, the gift of *interpretation* as well as of tongues." — *Bloomfield*. Or, in a somewhat different form: — Whether we pray or sing, in tongues, we should desire not only to feel the emotion of prayer and praise in our hearts, but also to understand the meaning of our words, so that we may interpret to others. See note on ver. 26.

16. *Else*. Otherwise; if this ability be not possessed. ¶ *When thou shalt bless, &c.* To bless and to give thanks are often used as convertible terms: See ver. 17; Matt. xiv. 19, and John vi. 11; Matt. xxvi. 26, and Luke xxii. 19. Blessing or giving thanks to God is an important part of prayer; and a part is here put for the whole. See ver. 15. ¶ *With the spirit*. Namely, as in ver. 14, in an unknown tongue, the heart being profited, but the mind unable to understand and interpret. ¶ *He that occupieth the room of the unlearned*. By this circumlocution the apostle is generally understood to mean an uninspired person, one not endowed with the gift of tongues; or perhaps rather a person not able to understand tongues. ¶ *Say Amen, &c.* See note on Matt. vi. 13. How can one respond to your prayer, and express his fervent assent, when he is utterly ignorant of what you have said?

17. *For thou verily givest thanks well*. Thou prayest well. See note on ver. 16. Thou prayest profitably to thyself. Your own heart is refreshed, and your prayer accepted, whether you comprehend your words or not. See note on ver. 14. ¶ *But the other is not edified*. Because "he understandeth not what thou sayest," and the spiritual impression on your heart is not communicated to him.

18. *I thank my God*. Paul did not

disregard nor undervalue the gift of tongues. Under certain circumstances it was highly important, as "for a sign" to unbelievers, ver. 22, to arouse their attention and to induce them the more willingly to hear the message of grace. He was truly thankful to God for granting him this gift so abundantly. Nevertheless, he did not regard this as the most valuable of all gifts, because of itself alone it was not so useful as some others, especially the ability to teach and instruct others, ver. 19. ¶ *I speak with tongues more than ye all*. It may well be supposed that Paul was able to address all those to whom he was sent, in their own language, as no intimation is given that he ever required the aid of an interpreter. The precise number of languages which he could speak is nowhere stated. It cannot however be supposed less than is enumerated in Acts ii. 9–11, for he was fully equal to his associates in all apostolical gifts. 2 Cor. xii. 11, 12. His object in mentioning this fact appears to be twofold: (1.) that none might suppose him to speak of this gift as inferior to others, merely because he himself was destitute, and to give the preference to another for which he was highly distinguished; and (2.) to rebuke, by his own example, ver. 19, the pride and arrogance of those among the Corinthians who made a parade of their gifts to the confusion and annoyance, rather than the edification, of the church, ver. 23. If he who possessed this gift more abundantly than any of them was so sparing in its use, — and there is no evidence that he ever addressed any people in language which they could not understand, — they might well doubt the propriety of exhibiting their powers of utterance on all occasions, without regard

19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.

20 Brethren, be not children

in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

21 In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will

to the capacity of their hearers to comprehend their meaning. And if he held this in subordination to a more useful gift, one more serviceable to the church, they might well doubt whether the possession of this alone really entitled them to the highest honor.

19. *In the church.* In the public assembly. In private, he might derive profit from tongues, ver. 14; but his whole argument has respect to their public use. ¶ *I had rather speak five words.* A small, definite number, indicating *very few*, according to a common idiom; just as "ten thousand" is used in the other member of the sentence to indicate *very many*. ¶ *With my understanding.* Being conscious of their meaning and able to interpret to others. The idea is, that he would rather instruct his brethren by even the briefest address, in language familiar to them and easily understood, than to speak for hours "in an unknown tongue," which at the best, without interpretation, could only excite their wonder and amazement.

20. *Brethren, be not children in understanding.* A different word in the Greek from that which occurs in ver. 14, 15, 19. In respect of knowledge, prudence, and good sense, be not like children, who are astonished and delighted by whatever is new and striking, without capacity to judge of its utility. Do not place too high a value on gifts, which may seem, and which actually are, extraordinary, without due regard to their proper use and efficiency for good. Be not childish in your admiration of comparative trifles, as if you were not capable of estimating their true value. ¶ *Howbeit in malice be ye children.* In one respect, nevertheless, in regard to malice and ill-will, imitate children, even infants. Although the same word is repeated in the translation, another is substituted

in the Greek, indicating those of a more tender age. See note on ch. xiii. 11. Banish envy and malice and strife from among you. Contend not concerning the relative importance and dignity of your respective gifts. Become rather like little children, in this regard. In like manner, our Lord proposed the example of a little child, as a dissuasive against ambition and the evils which follow in its train. Matt. xviii. 1-4. ¶ *But in understanding be men.* Be perfect; that is, of ripe age and judgment. "Behave with the good sense and prudence of full-grown men. It was a severe reproof to the Corinthians, who piqued themselves on their wisdom, to represent their speaking unknown languages, and their contending about precedence, as a childishness which men of good sense would be ashamed of." — *Mac-knight.*

21. *In the law it is written, &c.* See Isa. xxviii. 11, 12. The quotation is not exact, but general. *The law* is generally used in a more limited sense; but it here indicates the Old Testament, including the Prophets as well as the law. A like use of the word occurs in John x. 34; xv. 25. ¶ *With men of other tongues, &c.* In this case, as in many others, the apostle applies the language of the ancient prophets to subjects different from those originally designated. This prediction "seems to have been used by Paul, because the *words* which occurred in Isaiah would appropriately express the idea which he wished to convey, that God would make use of foreign languages for some valuable purpose." — *Barnes.* ¶ *They will not hear.* This part of the prophecy is quoted, perhaps, as an intimation that foreign languages are not always effectual to secure obedience; and possibly he may have intended to intimate that even

they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for

the gift of tongues did not always insure holiness of heart, as was evident in the case of the persons whom he was addressing.

22. *Wherefore.* This word is understood by some to indicate that what follows is a conclusion from the general argument, not from what immediately precedes. Others, quite as probably, regard the connection as more intimate. "Some are of opinion that Isaiah, in the words quoted, alludes to Deut. xxviii. 49, and that by God's speaking to the unbelieving Jews with another tongue is meant his punishing them by a foreign nation. But that sense of the prophet's words agrees neither with his design, nor with the apostles. Isaiah evidently foretells the methods which God in future times would use for converting the unbelieving Jews; and among others, that he would speak to them in foreign languages, that is, in the languages of the nations among whom they were dispersed. The passage, therefore, is a prediction of the gift of speaking foreign languages to be bestowed on the first preachers of the gospel. From the prophecy thus understood, the apostle's conclusion is clear and pertinent."—*Macknight*. Instead of saying that the prophet's language "is a prediction of the gift" mentioned by the apostle, I would prefer to say it is *applicable* to that gift, in the same manner that ancient prophecies are often applied in the New Testament. ¶ *Tongues are for a sign.* A significant indication that divine power is exerted, and that those who speak have been miraculously endowed. Like any other miracle, it arrests attention, and to a certain extent, at least, impresses the idea of divine agency, and secures for him through whom it is manifested, a more respectful and candid attention. Such was its effect on the day of Pentecost.

them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those*

Acts, ch. ii. ¶ *Not to them that believe.* Not to Christians. They already believe, and have no further need of signs. Or, if this interpretation be regarded as too broad, we may take the sense to be, "not so much to them that believe as to them that believe not." ¶ *But to them that believe not.* Signs were given for the special benefit of unbelievers, and this gift of tongues was conferred to aid in the propagation of Christianity, not only by enabling its preachers to speak intelligibly to foreigners, but to arrest the attention of unbelievers and impress upon their minds a consciousness of divine presence and energy. ¶ *But prophesying.* Teaching divine truth in an intelligible manner, in language easily understood, under the influence of inspiration; see note on Rom. xii. 6. Although this is not so striking a sign as "tongues" to unbelievers, yet it is especially useful to the edification of believers, tending both to the confirmation of their faith and the increase of their knowledge.

23. In this verse and the next, the apostle enforces his argument by contrasting the effects produced by a general exercise of these respective gifts in the public assembly. ¶ *If therefore the whole church be come together, &c.* That is, for public worship. ¶ *And all speak with tongues.* In each case, to make his argument stronger, he imagines the whole society present, and every member of it exercising his gift. If all who are thus endowed speak with tongues, which none or few else understand, and perhaps not even themselves. ¶ *And there come in those that are unlearned.* Those who do not understand the languages spoken. See note or ver. 16. ¶ *Or unbelievers.* Unbelieving Jews or Greeks. Such persons often attended the preaching of the apostle. It was so at Corinth. Acts xviii.

that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believ-

eth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest;

4. Very probably the same custom prevailed after his departure. Some might attend, with an honest desire to understand this new doctrine, and a willingness to embrace it upon proper evidence; others, from mere idle curiosity; others, with strong prejudices against it, seeking for opportunity to injure its advocates, like those who "watched" our Lord, and "sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor." Luke xx. 20. Unbelievers, of all these classes, frequently attend the ministrations of the gospel; and of such the apostle here speaks. ¶ *Will they not say that ye are mad?* That ye are fanatics, delirious, crazed. When this gift was first exhibited, it was truly an effectual "sign" to them who understood the languages uttered; but those who understood not said, "These men are full of new wine." Acts ii. 7-12. What seemed to them mere jargon they attributed to the insanity of intoxication. The argument is, that Christians should avoid any practice which might bring discredit upon the gospel; that they should refrain from an indiscriminate use of tongues, lest unbelievers, who understood them not, should be disgusted rather than convinced. "We must not be led, from any apparent analogy, to confound the exercise of the gift of tongues in the primitive church with modern exhibitions of fanaticism, which bear a superficial resemblance to it. We must remember that such modern pretensions to this gift must, of course, resemble the manifestations of the original gift in external features, because these very features have been the objects of intentional imitation." — *Conybeare*. It may be added that if the improper use of the genuine gift tended only to confusion and disorder,

much more must evil results be expected from the spurious imitations of it by fanatics.

24. *But if all prophesy.* See note on Rom. xii. 6. If all teach and exhort, under the influence of inspiration. In ver. 30-33, the apostle directs that this gift also should be exercised in an orderly manner. But he here contrasts even its disorderly and confused use, with the like use of tongues, showing its more beneficial result. He supposes the case, that all who enjoyed the gift of prophecy should use it together in the public assembly, and that each should teach and exhort his brother, many speaking at once, but all in a language commonly spoken and understood. ¶ *One that believeth not, or one unlearned.* See note on ver. 23. The language used is understood by the unlearned, because it is familiar to his ears; if he be already a believer, he has the opportunity to grow both in grace and knowledge, 2 Pet. iii. 18; if he be yet an unbeliever, the instructions and exhortations which he hears, even though he hear not all distinctly, in consequence of the confusion, may produce the effects immediately mentioned. ¶ *He is convinced of all.* "He is convicted of error in the notions he had entertained of Christianity, and convinced of his sin in opposing God's true religion; his understanding being convinced, and his conscience awakened." — *Bloomfield*. This seems to refer chiefly to "one that believeth not;" what follows, to one "unlearned," destitute of the knowledge of tongues, and including probably the idea of a very imperfect knowledge of gospel truth. ¶ *He is judged of all.* "He is put on his examination, is made to discern aright of his condition, as a poor ignorant sinner, needing the salvation of a Saviour." — *Bloomfield*.

25. *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest.* That is, to him-

and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 How is it then, brethren?

self. He perceives his true spiritual condition; his alienation from God; his need of salvation; his own inability and dependence on a higher power for aid. ¶ *And so falling down on his face.* The usual token of reverence and worship, in the east. See Matt. xvii. 6; xxvi. 39; Luke v. 12. ¶ *He will worship God.* He will reverence the true God. The idea is, he will be converted to Christianity, and will worship the true God in spirit and in truth. ¶ *And report that God is in you of a truth.* He will openly acknowledge his faith; he will confess before men that the power and the spirit of God are manifest in the gifts bestowed on you, and that you are worthy of belief as messengers of the truth. The following note on ver. 24, 25, is judicious:—"If all prophesy, no such ill consequences follow; here something is communicated which is universally intelligible, and by adapting the discourse to special exigencies, the most important moral results may be produced. This description is taken from the life. The Gentiles might frequently, from simple curiosity or an undefined feeling of longing, resort to the Christian assemblies. The inspired discourses they then heard suddenly unveiled to them their inward necessities, their sinfulness, and the necessity for redemption; and, overwhelmed by the power of the Spirit, they sank down, confessing that of a truth God was not only among the Christians, but present in them."—*Olshausen.*

26. *How is it then, brethren?* What is the conclusion? What results from the argument? What is indicated as proper under such circumstances? See note on ver. 15. ¶ *When ye come together.* Namely, for public worship, as in ver. 23. ¶ *Every one of you hath, &c.* Not that each one present had all the gifts afterwards specified; but that among them all, these several gifts might be possessed; a "psalm"

when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpreta-

tion by one, a "doctrine" by another, and so of the rest. If all should proceed at once to exercise their gift, the confusion resulting has already been described in ver. 23, where only a single gift is mentioned. The orderly and proper course is indicated in what follows, ver. 27-33. ¶ *Hath a psalm.* Is moved to sing praises to God. Singing was practised as a part of public worship, not only by the Jews, and by the heathen idolaters, but by the Christian church, from its organization. At the institution of the Lord's supper, a hymn was sung. Matt. xxvi. 30. See Acts xvi. 25; Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16; Jas. v. 13. ¶ *Hath a doctrine.* Hath some truth of the gospel specially impressed on his mind, which he desires to communicate to the brethren, or to unbelievers. ¶ *Hath a tongue.* Hath some communication in a foreign tongue, either understood or not by himself, but believed to be important because impressed by the Spirit, and worthy to be made known at once. There may be a reference here to the ostentatious use of tongues. ¶ *Hath a revelation.* Hath some important truth, made known to him by the Spirit, not generally understood by others. ¶ *Hath an interpretation.* Is conscious of ability to interpret what has been uttered in an unknown tongue, ver. 13-27, and is strongly moved to impart information to others. ¶ *Let all things be done unto edifying.* In such a manner as to build up the whole church in knowledge and grace. Each had his peculiar gift, and each his peculiar anxiety to exercise it. The apostle admonishes them that this could not be done profitably, unless done orderly. It is implied, of course, that proper order had not always been observed; that there had been confusion in the church; and that a reformation in this regard was necessary. "This implied reproof of the Corinthians is certainly a reproof of those public assemblies

tion. Let all things be done unto edifying.

27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret.

where many speak at the same time; or where a portion are engaged in praying and others in exhortation. Nor can it be urged that in such cases those who engage in these exercises are under the influence of the Holy Spirit; for however true that may be, yet it is no more true than it was in Corinth, and yet the apostle reproveth the practice there. The Holy Spirit is the author of order, and not of confusion, ver. 33; and true religion prompts to peace and regularity, and not to discord and tumult." — *Barnes*.

27. *Let it be by two, or at the most by three.* We can scarcely suppose, after what the apostle has said in ver. 23, of the confusion resulting from disorderly speech, that he here recommends that two or three should speak at once. Nor does the paraphrase by *Macknight* seem to express the most obvious meaning: "Let him speak by two, or at most by three, sentences at a time, and separately." The more probable meaning is, that not more than two or three persons should speak with tongues at the same meeting; and with this interpretation the succeeding words well agree. ¶ *And that by course.* Separately; one at a time; one after the other; "one by one," ver. 31. The difficulty had been, that several would speak together, producing confusion; moreover, so highly was the gift of tongues regarded by the Corinthians, that they seem to have devoted altogether too large a share of their public exercises to the display of this gift. In reference to this twofold evil, the apostle directs that not more than two or three shall address the church, in foreign tongues, during one meeting, to avoid monopolizing the time devoted to worship; and that only one shall speak at once, to avoid confusion. ¶ *And let one interpret.* See ver. 13. He would not permit even one thus to address the church

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

when regularly assembled for worship, unless there were some one present, either the speaker himself or some other, who could interpret, ver. 28. Every address should be made intelligible to the church, if not originally then by interpretation, so that all might be edified. If not understood, such addresses were unprofitable, ver. 2-6. Let some one, therefore, who is able to interpret, explain to the church what is spoken in tongues, under the influence of the spirit.

28. *But if there be no interpreter.* If no one be present who has the gift of "the interpretation of tongues," ch. xii. 10. If no one understands the language and is able to explain it to the brethren. ¶ *Let him keep silence in the church.* It is utterly useless to speak, when one is not understood, ver. 2-9. Besides, such speaking would prevent others from being heard unto edification. The apostle would not permit the public exercises of religion to be thus interrupted and hindered. It were well, if the spirit of this injunction were more generally heeded. ¶ *And let him speak to himself, and to God.* Let him silently commune with his own heart, and pray and give thanks unto God in secret. The heart derives benefit from devotional exercises, and God understands its emotions, its gratitude, and its aspirations, whether expressed in one language, or another, or none. See ver. 14, and Rom. viii. 26, 27.

29. *Let the prophets.* Those who teach and exhort, under a spiritual influence. See note on Rom. xii. 6. The rule already prescribed, ver. 27, concerning the use of tongues, is here applied also to the gift of prophecy; namely, that confusion be not produced by the speaking of many together; but that, by a due observance of order and regularity, all which is uttered may be understood, and thus

30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

the church receive edification. ¶ *Speak two or three.* Let not more than two or three address the church at one meeting, lest attention be distracted by the diversity of subjects, and these "by course," or separately: "one by one." ver. 31. See note on ver. 27. ¶ *And let the others judge.* Ordiscern, or discriminate. By some, this is supposed to refer to the whole body of the hearers; that all were to compare what was spoken with the great principles of revealed truth, and determine for themselves whether or not there was a substantial agreement. This is a good sense, and inculcates a lesson worthy the attention of all Christians who listen to public speakers. But it should be observed that the apostle is here giving special directions to those who were moved to speak in public; and it is natural to suppose that "the others" were of the same class. Moreover, in that early age, recent converts to christianity were very imperfectly acquainted with its principles, and comparatively few in any congregation would be capable of an intelligent discrimination. For these and other reasons, most commentators by "the others" understand other prophets, or those who had the gift styled "discerning of spirits," ch. xii. 10. "Let the rest of the prophets judge whether those who stand up to exercise the gift have really received it." — *Conybeare.* "Prophets is the subject of the whole sentence, implying that those who had the gift of *discernment* were included under the class of prophets." — *Stanley.* "Interpretation was of course not necessary to the prophets; instead of this, it is said 'let the rest judge.' — The gift of *discerning of spirits* shows that the prophets were not absolutely a pure medium of the divine Spirit; their old and not yet sanctified nature admitted much that had to be separated. It was only in the apostles that the potency of the Spirit revealed itself with a power so mighty and manifold, that error retreated before it, and in themselves the one gift immediately

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

supplied another, so that the revelations were subjected to no further *discernment.*" — *Olshausen.*

30. If *any thing* be revealed to another, &c. If, while one is speaking, an important truth be forcibly impressed on the mind of another, and he feel the necessity of uttering it, either for confirmation, or for correction, or as a distinct proposition. ¶ *Let the first hold his peace.* Let him close his discourse, and give place to the other, whose message may be more important than his own. It is not suggested that one might interrupt another; much less that two or more might continue speaking at once, ver. 23. But, upon a respectful and quiet intimation from the second, the first should bring his discourse to a close, or else give way for a season, until the other had been heard.

31. For ye may all prophesy one by one. All who possess the gift may have opportunity to exercise it in due time. If you preserve order, and give place to each other courteously and kindly, all may be heard to the edification of the church, even though you speak separately, and not more than two or three at one and the same meeting. ¶ *That all may learn, and all may be comforted.* This was then and is now the great object of religious teaching. It is elsewhere expressed by the single word *edification.* To learn the character and designs of God, and the necessities and duties and final destiny of mankind, is an object of the utmost consequence; it can be obtained only through "the gospel of the grace of God;" and this gospel must be made known ordinarily through human agents, before it can be understood, believed, and heartily embraced. See note on Rom. x. 17. Nothing contributes more effectually to the *comfort* and consolation of men, than a living faith in that gospel; for it is "the gospel of peace" and of "salvation." Eph. i. 13; vi. 15. Those, therefore, who announced the glorious truths of the gospel, in an

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

orderly manner, so that they might be heard and understood, truly edified the church, both instructing the minds and comforting the hearts of their brethren. That all public exercises might be so conducted as to secure this desirable result, is the object of the apostle's exhortation.

32. *And the spirits of the prophets, &c.* To the apostolic injunction, to refrain from disorder and confusion, and to preserve silence in the public assemblies, so that the single person speaking could be understood, it might be objected that no man could refrain from uttering the communications of the Spirit, whether in a foreign tongue or in the vernacular. On the contrary, the apostle asserts that no man is compelled by the Spirit to speak; but that each is capable of self-control, and may speak or remain silent, as under the circumstances may be judged proper and expedient. The absurdity of the opposite opinion is exhibited in ver. 33. The word here rendered *spirits* is the same which occurs in ver. 12, and is there translated "spiritual gifts," and it should have a similar translation here. "The meaning is, that the true prophets were not so violently and irresistibly moved and agitated, but that they had it in their power to observe order and decency; whereas, the transports, which the false prophets counterfeited, were extravagant to such a degree as that they seemed to think that their violence would seem a mark of their truth, as is observed by Basnage in his History of the Jews, B. V. ch. i., § 21."—*Pearce*. "The apostle's meaning is, that the operation of spiritual gifts in the mind of the prophets was subject to the will of the prophets; for which reason they were not to think themselves under a necessity of speaking when a revelation was made to them, especially if it was made to them while another prophet was speaking, ver. 30, but were to remain silent till the other had finished his revelation, to show the command which they had of them-

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

selves on such occasions."—*Macknight*. Such, substantially, is the general opinion of commentators.

33. *For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.* Paul had previously described the confusion resulting from the disorderly exercise of spiritual gifts, ver. 23; and had counselled his brethren to avoid such confusion by resisting the impulse to speak when another was speaking; and moreover had assured them that they were able to exercise such self-control. He now shows the absurdity of supposing themselves to be under an irresistible divine impulse to speak in a disorderly manner, inasmuch as the God of peace would thus be regarded as the author of confusion, or the God of order the author of disorder; for in this sense I suppose peace and confusion to be here contrasted. ¶ *As in all churches of the saints.* "As in all the churches of the saints is well known."—*Macknight*. "This is the constant practice of all Christian churches."—*Gilpin*. "As appears by the effects in all well-tempered, constituted churches."—*Hammond*. "As was everywhere apparent in the churches. Paul here appeals to them, and says that this was the fact wherever the true religion was spread, that it tended to produce peace and order. This is as true now as it was then."—*Barnes*. Some commentators join these words to the next verse, and regard them as a declaration that the practice in other churches was such as is here prescribed in regard to the speaking of women in the church. But I prefer the opinion of those whom I have already quoted.

34. *Let your women keep silence in the churches.* Most commentators understand the apostle in ver. 34, 35, to prohibit women, absolutely and universally, from speaking in assemblies for religious worship; and this prohibition they consider to be perpetually binding, in all ages of the church, and under all possible circumstances. Such, unquestionably, is the most obvious

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded*

sense of his language; yet, taken in connection with what he elsewhere says upon the same subject, ch. xi. 3-16, it may be doubted whether this interpretation be strictly correct. The apparent discrepancy between the two passages has taxed the skill of commentators, and various solutions have been proposed. By those who understand the prohibition to be absolute, it has been suggested that "as the apostle's intention in ch. xi. was only to show the indecency of the manner in which the women prayed and prophesied in the public assemblies, and not to consider whether the practice itself was permitted by Christ, no argument can be drawn in favor of that practice from his not prohibiting it."—*Macknight*. To the same effect, *Whitby*, *Barnes*, and others. On the other side, the text has been paraphrased thus:—"Let your women be silent in your religious assemblies, if they have not some extraordinary revelation; for it is not commonly permitted to them to speak on such public occasions. There is one apparent difficulty in reconciling this with ch. xi. 5, 15, in which the apostle seems to grant a liberty which he here denies. Besides the solution suggested in the paraphrase, some have thought he intended in the former passage only to say how women should speak, if they spoke at all; but here, absolutely to prohibit their doing it. But I cannot think he would debate and adjust the circumstances of doing an unlawful action."—*Doddridge*. "I am rather inclined to think, that in this instruction about women, no public teaching was supposed; but that it was meant to forbid women to ask questions and raise difficulties and scruples at church, which would tend to disturb the congregation. Inspired women, no doubt, had often taught in churches, and might teach. Anna, the prophetess, was an instance. Philip's four daughters, Acts xxi. 9, were other instances. And St. Paul himself, ch. xi. 5, seems

to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

35 And if they will learn anything, let them ask their hus-

to allow it, notwithstanding all that is said to reconcile that text with this. I cannot, therefore, suppose that St. Paul here absolutely forbids women to speak in the church. But their asking questions continually might have been a very disorderly thing, and have come to such a height that the apostle might think fit to suppress it."—*Gilpin*. Substantially the same interpretation is given by *Clarke*, in a note too long for insertion. The remarks of *Bloomfield*, quoted in the note on ch. xi. 16, are worthy to be considered in this connection. ¶ *To be under obedience*. That is, to their husbands. See note on ch. xi. 3. ¶ *As also saith the law*. Generally supposed to refer to Gen. iii. 16.

35. *And if they will learn anything, &c.* If anything has been spoken which they do not fully understand, or if any question of doctrine occur to them upon which they desire information, let them inquire of their husbands, at home. It should not be overlooked, that one fundamental idea running through this whole chapter is, that spiritual gifts and privileges should be so exercised as to promote the edification of the church. Hence, speaking with tongues, which none understood, is discountenanced, and prophecy, in familiar language, is commended as more profitable; hence, also, all disorder and confusion are condemned, as incompatible with the great object of religious exercises. Having prescribed rules to prevent such confusion, in regard to tongues and prophecy, the apostle adds another in respect to an evil which seems to have become prevalent in the church at Corinth, and forbids that women should interrupt the public exercises by asking questions. This they might better do at home, and avoid disturbing the church. Perhaps also the idea is included, that a proper respect for their husbands, according to the ideas prevalent in that age, demanded that the wives should appeal to them for

bands at home : for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

36 What! came the word of

instruction. The principal idea, however, is that they should not create confusion in the public assembly. ¶ *For it is a shame, &c.* It is disreputable. It is contrary to the general sense of propriety and decency. It is not alleged that such speaking is essentially wrong or sinful ; but that it was generally regarded as disgraceful. Among both Jews and Greeks, it would be scarcely extravagant to say, that women were regarded as having no rights which men were bound to respect. The spirit of the gospel has wrought a great change in public opinion since that day. But Paul recognized the existing state of things, and conformed to it so far as he might without criminality. See ch. ix. 19-22. And so here, after forbidding the public interruption of religious exercises, as tending to confusion, he adds that such interruption by females was generally regarded as indecent, and tended to bring disgrace upon the church ; and he would have no practice indulged, even though it were in itself innocent, which would "hinder the gospel of Christ," ch. ix. 12. In short, men were required to preserve order, as thus only would the church be edified ; and women, not only for the same reason, but for the additional reason that any violation of order by them would be regarded by both Jews and Greeks as a breach of decorum, and disgraceful to the church. See note on ch. xi. 16.

36. *What! came the word of God out from you?* Did the gospel originate at Corinth? Were the "oracles of God" first committed to your charge? and were you the first authorized preachers of the gospel? ¶ *Or came it unto you only?* Has no other church been instructed and enlightened? Are you alone authorized to prescribe rules and to establish customs? Some suppose these questions were specially addressed to women, as an enforcement of their duty to be silent. "What! went the word of God forth

God out from you? or came it unto you only?"

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let

into the world from you women? Did Christ employ any of your sex as apostles? Or did the word only come to you by the ministry of men? How then can ye pretend to teach men?"—*Macknight.* It is very true, doubtless, that the twelve apostles were men, and that women were not included in the number. But it may not be impertinent to remark, that one principal duty of Christ's apostles was to be witnesses of his resurrection, Acts i. 22 ; that the resurrection was first made known to women, Matt. xxviii. 5-7 ; and that the first person whom Christ specially commissioned to announce his resurrection, even to the apostles themselves, was Mary Magdalene. John xx. 17. The true meaning of the text, I think, is better expressed thus : "The apostle fortifies the injunctions contained in this and the two preceding chapters (but chiefly those in the foregoing verses, especially ver. 33, which refers to the example of other churches), by adverting to a fact, namely, that the Corinthians had no priority of conversion to plead, or or any superiority over other churches, which might give them a privilege to deviate from the general practice ; as if he had said, Is yours the mother church, or the only church? There is an allusion to Isa. ii. 3. The inference is, you must therefore submit to the custom of the generality."—*Bloomfield.*

37. *If any man think himself to be a prophet.* If any man believe and profess himself to be endowed with the gift of prophecy. See note on ch. xii. 10. ¶ *Or spiritual.* If he regard himself as under the extraordinary influence of the Spirit, or as a partaker of "spiritual gifts." ¶ *Let him acknowledge, &c.* "Let him prove his inspiration by recognizing that the words which I write are no less than commandments of the Lord."—*Stanley.* A similar sentiment is embraced in 1 John iv. 6. Those who were really spiritual, and could discern

him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

spirits, would recognize the spiritual character of Paul's communications, and would acknowledge his apostolical authority; they would therefore obey his injunctions.

38. *But if any man be ignorant.* In contrast with ver. 37, this must be understood to mean, neither a prophet nor spiritual; that is, a man actually destitute of spiritual influences, whatever his pretensions or position. This is generally understood to refer to the false teachers and their adherents at Corinth, who disregarded the authority of Paul, and refused obedience. ¶ *Let him be ignorant.* I have given sufficient proof of my apostleship; the doctrines preached by me commend themselves to every Christian, as the truth of God. If any remain unconvinced, and acknowledge neither the one nor the other, I shall not argue further with him; let him remain in ignorance, until otherwise enlightened. "He that will not, I have no more to say to him; let him take the effects of his obstinate and wilful ignorance."

— *Pyle.* A somewhat similar form of address was adopted by Paul, when the Jews at Corinth "opposed themselves and blasphemed." Acts xviii. 6.

39. *Covet to prophesy.* See notes on ch. xii. 31; xiv. 1. Desire and pray for this, as more valuable and serviceable than any other spiritual gift. There is one grace, more excellent than all gifts, ch. xiii.; but among the "gifts," this is the most important, and should be chiefly desired. In this verse and the next, we have the general conclusion or result of the argument commenced, ch. xii. 1. ¶ *And forbid not to speak with tongues.* This gift, though less useful than prophecy, is not to be despised or disregarded. In its proper place and under proper circumstances, it may be

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

CHAPTER XV.

MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you,

used for the furtherance of the gospel and the edification of the church. Its use, therefore, is not to be entirely prohibited.

40. *Let all things be done decently and in order.* Whatever gift be exercised, let due regard be had to decorum and regularity. "This order, saith Theodoret, he had taught in the words foregoing. Let all things be done *decently*; not like children, ver. 20; not so as to give occasion to others to say you are mad, ver. 23; not so as to breed confusion, ver. 33; not indecently by women speaking in the church, ver. 34, 35; *in order*, that is, one after another, or by course, ver. 27, 31. See Chrysostom, Oecumenius, and Theophylact, descanting upon these words to this effect." — *Whitby.* The rule here given deserves careful attention by all churches in all ages. Customs may be changed, from time to time, without impropriety, and perhaps with advantage. But in any and all such changes, the great principles of decorum and regularity should be religiously observed. Indecency and disorder should have no place in the sanctuary; "for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace," ver. 33.

CHAPTER XV.

The connection between this chapter and the preceding portion of the epistle is not very obvious; yet I apprehend such a connection exists; in other words, this chapter contains a discussion of what may justly be regarded as one of the subjects upon which the Corinthians had requested advice and direction, ch. vii. 1. In reply to their inquiries, the subject of marriage is discussed in ch. vii.; of "things offered unto idols," with supplemental remarks concerning the

which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ;

proper manner of uniting in Christian assemblies and feasts, in ch. viii.—xi.; of “spiritual gifts,” in ch. xii.—xiv.; and last and most important of all, the subject of the “resurrection” in ch. xv. Had this section of the epistle commenced, similar to the others, with the phrase, “now concerning the resurrection of the dead,” the connection, in this sense, would be manifest. But without such introduction, there is internal evidence, ver. 12, 35, and elsewhere, that this subject was included among the questions proposed to the apostle by his brethren at Corinth.

That unbelievers should reject the doctrine of the resurrection, would be natural. But, at first sight, it seems unaccountable that Christians should entertain doubts of its truth. As to the character and effect of those doubts, we have scarcely any information, except from the arguments of the apostle; but from these it appears that some, who firmly believed that Christ rose from the dead, denied that all mankind shall be raised in like manner, saying “that there is no resurrection of the dead,” ver. 12. It is not an unreasonable supposition, that they had embraced the same error which is attributed to Hymenius and Alexander in 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18; namely, “that the resurrection is past already.” Supposing that the only resurrection taught by our Lord was a spiritual resurrection from ignorance and sinfulness through faith in the gospel, and knowing that this was already accomplished in regard to believers, they denied any resurrection after the death of the body, which should be analogous to the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. To remove all doubt on this subject, to announce distinctly and with authority the doctrine of a resurrection after the death of the body, and to describe its character and results, is the design of this chapter.

1. *Moreover.* In addition to what has been said. This particle, ordinarily translated *but*, is “strictly adverbative, but more frequently denotes

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I

transition and conversion, and serves to introduce something else, whether opposite to what precedes, or simply continuative or explanatory.”—*Robinson*. Here it is used to denote the transition from one subject to another embraced in the same letter of inquiry, ch. vii. 1. ¶ *I declare unto you.* Not for the first time, however, as is evident from what follows. The sense is, I remind you; that is, for impressing more firmly on your minds the truth which I formerly preached. ¶ *The gospel which I preached unto you.* The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fundamental doctrine of the gospel, and is here specially designed. His death and burial are also mentioned incidentally, as necessarily connected with a genuine resurrection. Paul was the earliest preacher of Christianity at Corinth. And, to quiet and remove their doubts, he calls the attention of his brethren to the great fact which had first arrested their attention, and on which their faith was originally founded. The apostles regarded the resurrection of Jesus as the great truth to be proclaimed, in proof of his divine mission. Acts i. 22; ii. 22–24; iii. 12–15; iv. 10, 33; v. 29–32; xiii. 30–33; xvii. 2, 3; xxv. 19; xxvi. 23. ¶ *Which also ye have received.* Such was the doctrine which you embraced. ¶ *And wherein ye stand.* Wherein ye remain firm; or the meaning may be, this is the only foundation on which you can stand securely.

2. *By which also ye are saved.* Through faith in the gospel, you have already entered upon the enjoyment of that special salvation which is the fruit of faith. See 1 Tim. iv. 10, and note on Rom. i. 16. ¶ *If ye keep in memory,* &c. Literally, if ye hold fast; having reference to steadfastness of faith rather than to retentiveness of memory. ¶ *Unless ye have believed in vain.* “Unless it shall turn out that it was vain to believe, and that the doctrine was false.”—*Barnes*. See ver. 14, for a similar reference to believing in vain.

3. *For I delivered unto you. I*

preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures :

preached this doctrine to you, when I founded your church. In the account of Paul's labors at Corinth, it is stated generally that "he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks, — and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ." Acts xviii. 4, 5. He declares here, what we might infer from his custom elsewhere, that he taught the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a fundamental doctrine of the gospel. See note on ch. iii. 11. ¶ *First of all.* Not that Corinth was the first place where he preached this doctrine; but that when he preached there, this was the first truth proclaimed; namely, "Jesus Christ and him crucified," ch. ii. 2, and raised from the dead. ¶ *That which I also received.* Paul does not profess to have been an eye-witness of what he here relates, except the single fact mentioned in ver. 8. But he had received credible information from those who had been such. And he had also received more authentic proof of the facts "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. i. 12. See also Acts xxvi. 13–18. ¶ *How that Christ died for our sins.* That there should be a resurrection from the dead, death must first actually take place. The apostle therefore affirms, as a necessary preliminary, that the Lord Jesus Christ truly died. See note on Matt. xxvii. 66. In what sense he "died for our sins," see note on Rom. iv. 25; viii. 3. ¶ *According to the Scriptures.* The reference is to the writings of the Old Testament; in which are many predictions that the Messiah, or the Christ, should die. Among these predictions may be named Isa. lii. 6–9; Dan. ix. 26; Zach. xii. 10. For a similar reference to the Scriptures, see Luke xxiv. 25–27, 44–46; Acts viii. 35.

4. *And that he was buried.* Actual burial was not essential to a proper

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures :

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve :

6 After that, he was seen of

resurrection. Yet it is mentioned in confirmation of the death, not only because burial never takes place until the fact of death is considered certain, but because in this particular case the precautions taken by his enemies in connection with the burial of Jesus, were of an extraordinary character, and furnished additional proof both of his death and of his resurrection. See note on Matt. xxvii. 66. ¶ *And that he rose again the third day, &c.* It is not asserted that the time was specially defined in "the Scriptures;" but the fact was predicted. Peter exhibits this argument in Acts ii. 24–32, appealing to Ps. xvi. 8–11, as a prediction. On the subject of Christ's resurrection, see note at the end of Matt. xxviii.

5. *And that he was seen of Cephas.* See note on ch. ix. 5. The original name of this apostle was Simon. Our Lord bestowed on him the Syriac name, *Cephas*, John i. 42, and the Greek name, *Petros*, anglicized *Peter*, Matt. xvi. 18, both names signifying a stone or a rock. This appearance to Peter alone is mentioned in Luke xxiv. 34. ¶ *Then of the twelve.* The original apostles were commonly designated "the Twelve," even after their number was reduced to eleven by the defection and death of Judas Iscariot. See John xx. 24–29.

6. *He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.* "The only appearance of the gospel narratives, which can be identified with this to the five hundred, is that to the disciples in Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 16–18, where from the expression "but some doubted," it has been sometimes, though doubtfully, argued that there must have been others present besides the eleven apostles who alone are expressly mentioned. It is remarkable that the number of those believers to whom our Lord is here said to have

above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

appeared should so far exceed the sum total of believers (one hundred and twenty) mentioned in Acts i. 15, as assembled in Jerusalem after the ascension. If it were the meeting described in Matt. xxviii. 16, the larger number might perhaps be accounted for by the effect of our Lord's teaching as still preserved in the scene of his original ministrations. If, as is perhaps implied by the order in which it occurs, it were some meeting at Jerusalem not mentioned in the Gospels, then we must suppose that the numbers were swelled by Galileans or other disciples, not yet dispersed after the concourse of the passover."—*Stanley*. ¶ *Of whom the greater part remain unto this present.* Are still living. Whoever these five hundred brethren were, and whatever the time and place of Christ's appearance to them after his resurrection, Paul declares that a majority of the whole number were yet alive. Their testimony was obtainable, if necessary. What more conclusive proof of the resurrection could be required, or even conceived? What the apostle asserts on the authority of revelation and other credible information, ver. 3, he offers to substantiate by the testimony of some hundreds of eye-witnesses. If this were not sufficient, reliance on human testimony might well be abandoned; for if so many might be deceived, a larger number would be equally liable to deception; and if so many would combine, and persist in maintaining a falsehood, the concurrent testimony of any conceivable number would be equally liable to suspicion and discredit. See this argument more at length in note at the end of Matt. ch. xxviii. ¶ *But some are fallen asleep.* Have died. Sleep is a term frequently used in the Scriptures, as equivalent to death. To sleep with one's fathers, in the Old Testament, is a common phrase to denote death and burial.

7. *After that, he was seen of James.*

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen

This is supposed to have been the brother or cousin of our Lord, sometimes styled James the Less, to distinguish him from James, the brother of John, called James the Great, who was slain by order of Herod, Acts xii. 2, long before the date of this epistle. This James presided over the church at Jerusalem, and appears to have been recognized by the apostles as their presiding officer, when assembled for deliberation. See note on Acts xv. 13. Paul had a personal interview with this apostle, when he visited Jerusalem, Gal. i. 19; and each would naturally inform the other that he had personally seen the Lord, after his resurrection. The appearance to James alone, which is here mentioned, is not particularly recorded in either of the Gospels; but he was frequently, it would seem, "seen of them forty days," Acts i. 3; and during this time, probably, this event occurred. ¶ *Then of all the apostles.* Some commentators refer this to the interview in Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 16, 17; but as it is placed last in the series of his appearances before his ascension, it seems more natural to suppose the apostle speaks of that last interview at Bethany, when he "was parted from them and carried up into heaven,"—"and a cloud received him out of their sight." Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 9.

8. *And last of all.* After all the appearances previously mentioned. All these were witnessed before the ascension. That which is about to be named, was afterwards. The phrase is generally and correctly supposed to indicate the last in the order of time. From what follows, however, it is not improbable that its peculiar form was adopted in reference to the reason why Paul did not have this ocular proof of the resurrection at an earlier period. He had been an unbeliever; and to this fact he alludes here and elsewhere, as a source of mortification and regret, ver. 9; 1 Tim. i. 13. There is an apparent intimation that the priv-

of me also, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to

ilege of seeing the Lord was delayed, in his case, on account of his unbelief. ¶ *He was seen of me also.* See Acts ix. 3-6, 17: xxvi. 12-18. Paul had previously, ver. 6, appealed to the testimony of hundreds, who had seen Jesus Christ alive after he had been dead; he now declares himself to be an eye-witness of the same fact, and asserts that he understands what he says and whereof he affirms. 1 Tim. i. 7. ¶ *As of one born out of due time.* "As it were by an untimely birth."—*Conybeare.* "As an abortion."—*Haweis.* This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. There may be an allusion here to the fact that Paul did not see the Lord at what might seem to be the most proper time, namely, immediately after the resurrection. But the more general opinion is, that he describes his personal and perhaps official position by this disparaging epithet, not indeed because he was conscious of unfaithfulness in the apostleship, ver. 10, but because his previous conduct had rendered him unworthy to be placed in that office, ver. 9.

9. *For I am the least of all the apostles.* Least, that is, in desert, or in previous qualification for the office. The other apostles had accompanied Jesus during his ministry, and listened to his personal instructions, "from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up," Acts i. 21, 22; and if they did not understand his true character previous to his resurrection, they were at least his friends, regarding him as the Messiah, according to the common opinion of the Jews. But Paul was an unbeliever and a persecutor; and he often refers to this fact, as rendering him unworthy of the apostleship. See Eph. iii. 8, where, with reference to the same disqualification, he styles himself "less than the least of all saints." ¶ *That am not meet to be called an apostle.* That am not worthy to sustain the office, or to rank with my asso-

be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace

ciates, who embraced our Lord when living, were faithful to him until death, and were original witnesses of his resurrection. ¶ *Because I persecuted the church of God.* See Acts ix. 1, 2; xxii. 4, 5; xxvi. 9-11; 1 Tim. i. 13. For this reason he was humiliated in his own sight before God.

10. *But by the grace of God I am what I am.* By the favor of God. The office bestowed on me,—for he manifestly speaks of his official position and conduct, rather than of his personal character,—is not the reward of merit; it was not awarded as justly due, on account of my previous faithfulness or obedience; but it was conferred as a matter of grace or favor. It is also true of every man, that all his advantages are to be ascribed to the grace of God; for we are all "unprofitable servants," Luke xvii. 10, and cannot claim to have rendered any service to the Lord for which he should repay us. Rom. xi. 35. ¶ *And his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain.* I have not abused the divine gift, nor have I been slothful in the work committed to my charge. "It is, as it were, a correction of his previous strong expressions; a protest against the possible misconception of his words by those to whom he had previously alluded in the same indirect manner, in ch. ix. 1-5, when there was a question of his right to the apostleship. Though I am the least of the apostles, though I am not fit to bear the name which I bear, though it is but by the goodness of God that I am anything, yet still I am what I am; it is not for nothing that God's goodness was so wonderfully shown towards me. Although my right to the name of an apostle may be doubted, even by myself, yet my exertion has been greater than that of any of the apostles."—*Stanley.* ¶ *But I labored more abundantly than they all.* This declaration is fully verified in the Acts of the Apostles. "The other apostles confined their

which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

preaching for the most part to the Jews, Gal. ii. 9; but Paul preached the gospel to all the Gentile nations, from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum, Rom. xv. 19, and also to the Jews, who lived in those countries; and by his labors he converted great numbers both of the Jews and Greeks. Moreover, as his success in spreading the gospel exceeded the success of the other apostles, so his labors, if we may judge of them from his own account, 2 Cor. xi. 23-28, greatly exceeded theirs likewise."—*Macknight*. ¶ *Yet not I, &c.* Lest his protestation of diligence and faithfulness should seem vain-glorious, the apostle disclaims the idea that he had performed such labor by his own unaided strength. He acknowledged that "it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 13. The same grace which had placed him in the apostleship had enabled him to perform its duties; and he acknowledged his obligations equally for both gifts. In ver. 9-10, we have one of Paul's characteristic digressions. Having mentioned the fact, that he had personally seen the Lord Jesus after his resurrection, he was led to acknowledge his unworthiness of such a blessed privilege; and a comparison between himself and others naturally followed.

11. *Therefore, whether it were I or they.* Namely, the other apostles. He here returns to the main subject, the fact of Christ's resurrection. On this subject, the testimony of Paul and the other apostles was the same. All had seen him, and all testified that he was alive again from the dead. It was wholly immaterial whether the Corinthians received this testimony from one or another of the number; it was the same in substance, and rested on the same authority. ¶ *So we preach.* We all preach the resurrection of the Lord, ver. 1-4, and all pledge our

11 Therefore whether *it were I* or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead,

veracity as eye-witnesses of his existence after he had been dead and buried, ver. 5-8. ¶ *And so ye believed.* You embraced this doctrine as a fundamental article of faith. The evidence presented to you convinced you that Christ has actually risen from the dead. There is no evidence that the Corinthians had abandoned their faith in this doctrine. On the contrary, the whole argument, ver. 12-19, proceeds upon the supposition that they continued firm in the belief that Jesus died and rose again. The foregoing statement of the doctrine and its proof was designed, therefore, not to convert them to its belief, for they already believed; but to refresh their minds as to its proof, to remind them of its importance, and to fix their attention directly upon it, as the foundation of the subsequent argument for the resurrection of all men.

12. *Now if Christ be preached, &c.* If this be so preached and demonstrated as to be believed, as in ver. 11; if this be an established and undeniable truth. The nature and force of the argument is well stated thus: "The sense is, 'but if it be publicly maintained or announced by us all, that Christ arose from the dead, how can some of you maintain,' &c. The argument, as Crellius remarks, being this: 'If Christ rose, then the resurrection of the dead is not only possible, but actual.' We have here a conclusion from the foregoing premises: that is to say, now Christ really and actually rose from the dead, as has been evinced on irrefragable evidence. How, then, can any deny the possibility of a resurrection? For what has once been, may again be. And, on the other hand, if a resurrection of the dead were to be supposed to be a vain imagination, not deserving of our belief, our faith in the resurrection of Christ would be destroyed. It is well shown by Gerdesius, that in ver. 12-19,

how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

the apostle treats of the connection between the resurrection of the *dead*, and the resurrection of *Christ*, and the indubitable proof thereof; tacitly rebuking the Corinthians for dulness, in not seeing this, and for too great readiness to lend an ear to the suggestions of deceivers." — *Bloomfield*.

¶ *How say some among you, &c.* How can the resurrection of the dead be denied by any who believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Such is the point of the question. The contradiction and absurdity involved in believing the one and denying the other are exhibited in ver. 13-19. Among the Jews, the Sadducees believed "that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit." Matt. xii. 23; Acts xxiii. 8. And when Paul preached at Athens that God raised Christ from the dead, it is recorded that, "when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked." Acts xvii. 32. Both these elements of disbelief may have crept into the Corinthian church; for Jews and Gentiles were among its members. As in regard to other doctrines and ceremonies, so in regard to this, conversion to Christianity did not at once free the mind from all error. The Jews carried into the church many of their Jewish prejudices and opinions, as is manifest from the apostolic history and epistles. It is equally manifest, that the Greeks carried with them many of their philosophical theories, and attempted to harmonize them with the new doctrine. Hence the constant effort of Paul and the other apostles, to purify Christianity from the corruptions thus introduced. However absurd it might be to deny the resurrection of mankind while believing that Christ was raised, the apostle's argument proves the existence as well as the absurdity of such denial.

13. *Then is Christ not risen.* This is the first consequence, named by the apostle, resulting from the alleged fact that there is no resurrection. Some interpret the passage thus: Christ had

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen :

taught the resurrection; "wherefore, if there is to be no resurrection of the dead, Christ is a deceiver, whom no person in his right senses can suppose God to have raised, and to have declared his son." — *Macknight*. Such an argument is conclusive; it is truly inconceivable that God should bestow such a signal favor on a deceiver, and in such a way, too, as to confirm the deception by an apparent demonstration of its truth. But it is not probable that the apostle designed to use that argument here. The more obvious meaning of his language is probably its true meaning. The resurrection of the dead was denied as unphilosophical and absurd. Be it so, says Paul; but if it be so, then Christ is not risen; for he was dead and buried; and his resurrection would involve just as much difficulty, of whatever kind, as the resurrection of any other, or of all. Whatever higher nature may have belonged to him, he had a body of flesh and blood; which body, in his case at least, was reanimated, and was seen and handled by his disciples, if their testimony may be believed. But if no such resurrection is possible and true, then their testimony is false, and Christ is not risen. In short, if none can be raised, it follows that one individual cannot be raised; if you regard the resurrection as intrinsically incredible, you cannot believe that a single person has been raised.

14. *And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain.* This consequence also unavoidably results. The apostles proclaimed the gospel upon the authority of Jesus Christ, who was "declared to be the Son of God — by the resurrection from the dead." See note on Rom. i. 4. Let the fact of his resurrection be disproved, and all reliance on his authority as a divine messenger would be destroyed. "It would be vain and useless to preach. The substance of their preaching was that Christ was raised up; and all their preaching was based on that. If

14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he

that were not true, the whole system was false, and Christianity was an imposition."—*Barnes*. Christ said, "because I live, ye shall live also." John xiv. 19. His apostles preached that men should enjoy spiritual and immortal life, because Christ possessed both; but if he were not raised, he actually possessed neither, and it was vain and useless to preach in his name. ¶ *And your faith is also vain.* See ver. 2. Your faith can be of no real advantage, if it consist in believing a falsehood. "If Christ hath not been raised, the gospel being stripped of the evidence which it derives from the resurrection of its author, the whole of the preaching of the apostles is absolutely false, and the faith of the Corinthians in the divine original of the gospel, and of all Christians from the beginning to the present hour, is likewise false."—*Macknight*. Such faith was useless and vain. If they were not prepared to abandon their faith altogether, as of no value to them, they should beware how they denied one of its fundamental truths, on which, indeed, the whole structure rested.

15. *Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God.* Or, concerning God, concerning what he has done, namely, "that he raised up Christ." I apprehend the apostle does not here refer to the criminality of his associates and himself, if they were false witnesses, as some commentators suppose, but rather to the effect which such a conviction of falsehood on their part must have on the Corinthians. The argument seems to be this:—not only is your faith vain and destitute of proper foundation, if the great fact of Christ's resurrection be not true; but, moreover, if that fact be not true, we are false witnesses, for we have testified it as within our personal knowledge; and if we are false witnesses in regard to this, we are unworthy of credit in

raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17 And if Christ be not raised,

regard to any other doctrine. You have believed the gospel upon our testimony; but if we are false witnesses concerning its fundamental truth, what evidence have you that the whole system is not false, from beginning to end? your faith is unfounded and vain, unless our testimony be true, ver. 17. ¶ *Because we have testified, &c.* We have constantly affirmed concerning God "that he raised up Christ." This was proclaimed by all the apostles in all places, as the great fact lying at the very foundation of a reasonable belief in Christianity. See note on ver. 1. ¶ *Whom he raised not up, &c.* If there be no resurrection of the dead, if a resurrection be impossible or absurd, the fact is just as true in regard to Christ as in regard to any other, and he cannot have risen. See note on ver. 13.

16. *For if the dead rise not, &c.* This verse is, in its terms, almost a literal repetition of ver. 13; the application, however, is slightly different. In ver. 13, the object is to show the absurdity of believing that Jesus rose, while denying the possibility of a resurrection from the dead; here the object is to show that "if the dead rise not," the apostles were of necessity false witnesses, and unworthy of credit in any respect, for they had testified that God "raised up Christ," which could not be true "if the dead rise not."

17. *And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, &c.* The idea, embraced in ver. 14, is repeated, with an addition, indicating a further disadvantage involved in a denial of the resurrection. "Up to this point, he has been speaking of the effects of the denial of the general resurrection on the announcement of the resurrection of Christ; not 'if Christ be not risen, there is no resurrection,' but, 'if there

your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are

be no resurrection, then is Christ not risen.' Now, he advances a step further, and after having, in ver. 15, 16, shown that by the [denial of the] general resurrection his preaching would be rendered unmeaning, he now in ver. 17, 18, shows that by the consequent denial of the resurrection of Christ, their faith would be rendered unmeaning, for there would be this two-fold result:—(1.) That if Christ be not risen, they would not rise from the death of sin. Compare Rom. vi. 1–11, of which this passage is evidently the germ. (2.) That if Christ be not risen, those believers who are already dead would have perished. This last is put as the climax of the whole argument. One of the most harrowing thoughts, as we see from 1 Thess. iv. 13, to the apostolical Christians, was the fear lest their departed brethren should by a premature death be debarred from that communion with the Lord which they hoped to enjoy; and in itself nothing could be more disheartening and disappointing to the Christian's hope, than to find that Christians had lived and died in vain."—*Stanley*. ¶ *Ye are yet in your sins.* A living faith in a risen and glorified Saviour, inspiring an ardent desire to obey and imitate him, has a tendency to purify the heart from sinful desires, Acts xv. 9. If they abandoned faith in his resurrection, and consequently ceased to regard him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," Matt. xvi. 16, their desire to obey and imitate him would cease also; nay more, if he had not risen, if he were not truly living before God, he could not exert any purifying influence on their hearts, and it would be vain to expect deliverance from sin, here or hereafter, through him. See notes on Rom. v. 9, 10.

18. *Then they also, &c.* Many commentators interpret this verse to mean, that "if Christ be not raised," ver. 17, then his faithful followers who had died were in a state, not of unconsciousness or nonentity, but of misery. Such an idea is entirely for-

fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have

eign to the question under discussion, — which is simply whether or not there shall be a resurrection of the dead, ver. 12, whether or not the dead shall live again; the argument is, substantially, if there be no resurrection, Christ is not raised; but if Christ be not raised, Christianity is false; all faith in it must be abandoned; and no benefit can be expected through his ministry. On the supposition that there is no future life, which is the error here opposed by the apostle, misery after death would be wholly out of the question; and we should recollect that he is pointing out the consequences which would result from the admission that "there is no resurrection of the dead." Others more properly understand the idea to be simply, that "if Christ be not raised," his deceased disciples will not be restored to life. "They have lost their life and being together, on this supposition, in the cause of one who, if still among the dead, must have been an impostor and false prophet."—*Doddridge*. It is not unlikely that some of those who denied the resurrection of the dead, in common with the Grecian philosophers, had some dim expectation of a future life. While they rejected the doctrine of a proper resurrection as unphilosophical and absurd, they supposed the soul might retain a shadowy existence, in an unsubstantial form, of which, however, their ideas were very indistinct and unsettled. The apostle declares that, if there be no resurrection, all such expectations are utterly vain. None who die can enter upon the future life, except through the resurrection. "If the dead rise not," therefore, those who have died have utterly perished; they live no more.

19. *If in this life only we have hope in Christ.* If our hopes be bounded by the present life; if there be no future life, in which we may receive benefits through Jesus Christ. ¶ *We are of all men most miserable.* "In what is said, there is, as Crellius observes, an

hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen

answer to a tacit objection, namely, that the apostles know there will be no resurrection, but preach the doctrine for present advantage. Now this is shown to involve an absurdity; because, by preaching the doctrine in question, they expose themselves to present evil of every kind; and if there is to be no resurrection of the dead, there will be no future state in which they could enjoy any reward. Thus they would act as they do without any motive." — *Bloomfield*. See notes on ver. 23, 30, where substantially the same idea is expressed in a different form. The apostle does not design to say that a life of Christian holiness was more productive of misery than a life of unbelief and ungodliness; for this would be contradictory to his uniform testimony elsewhere. But he means simply, that, if Christ were not raised, and the preaching of "Jesus and the resurrection" were false, he and his associates in vain endured persecution, and distress, and imprisonment, and stripes, and were in constant peril of death. In such case, they had no encouragement to sustain them in their afflictions, but were of all men in a most pitiable condition. He refers not to the practice of virtue generally, but to his official conduct in particular. "This passage, therefore, does not mean that virtue and piety are not attended with happiness; it does not mean that, even if there were no future state, a man would not be more happy if he walked in the paths of virtue than if he lived a life of sin; it does not mean that the Christian has no happiness in religion itself, in the love of God, and in prayers and praise, and in purity of life. In all this he has enjoyment; and even if there were no heaven, a life of virtue and piety would be more happy than a life of sin." — *Barnes*.

20. *But now is Christ risen from the dead.* "From this gloomy thought he breaks off into the joyful contrast, suggested by the fact that in spite of these speculations, Christ has risen;

from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

and that as in his not rising, the Christian hope of immortality would have perished, so in his resurrection, the whole human race, of which he is the true representative, rises also. Compare ch. xii. 12." — *Stanley*. Hitherto he had spoken of the consequences of a denial of the resurrection; and he had declared that "if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen," ver. 13. He now reiterates his declaration that "Christ is risen," — which would not be true "if the dead rise not," ver. 16, and of course asserts with equal confidence and positiveness that all others shall also be raised, and made alive in him, ver. 22. ¶ *And become the first-fruits of them that slept.* Or, of them who have died. Under the Jewish law, it was required that the first-fruits, such as the first-ripened sheaf of grain, should be offered to the Lord, Lev. xxiii. 10, 11; the same rule applied to the oil and wine, Numb. xviii. 12, and to the firstlings of the flocks and herds. Ex. xiii. 12; Numb. xviii. 17. The same term is often employed in the New Testament, to indicate what is first in the order of time, as compared with others of the same kind, and what is a portion, a pledge, or foretaste, of the whole which is to follow. It may here be understood, that Christ was the first, in the order of time, who was so raised as to demonstrate the truth of a resurrection to immortal life. Some, as the widow's son and Lazarus, had been raised in the natural body, and had died again. But Christ had been raised, and openly manifested "by infallible proofs," Acts i. 1; his disciples saw him ascend into heaven; and his continued existence was subsequently manifested, not only by the influence of his Spirit, but by a personal appearance to Paul. So that he might well be regarded as the *first visible* fruits of the resurrection to immortality. This is by no means inconsistent with the supposition that a resurrection in spiritual though invisible bodies may have been previously

21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

in progress. See note at the end of ch. xvi. But the term has another meaning, which is indicated in Numb. xviii. 12, namely, the best, the most perfect of its kind: — "All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine and of the wheat, the first-fruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord," &c. We may, therefore, understand it here as indicating that Christ was first or chief in dignity. "It was not merely or mainly that Christ was the first in order of time that rose from the dead, for Lazarus and the widow's son had been raised before him; but it was that he was chief in regard to the dignity, value, and importance of his rising; he was connected with all that should rise, as the first sheaf of the harvest was with the crops, he was a part of the mighty harvest of the resurrection, and his rising was a portion of that great rising, as the sheaf was a portion of the harvest itself; and he was so connected with them all, and their rising so depended on his, that his resurrection was a demonstration that they would rise." — *Barnes*. If to this we add, that Christ is the head of the spiritual state, the chief in dignity, the pattern to whom all are to be conformed, ver. 49, we shall probably apprehend the apostle's meaning. See note at the end of ch. xvi.

21. *For since by man came death.* The mortality of the human race was first manifested in the death of man. When death first destroyed human life, it came, it entered the world, it was manifested as the common lot of mortals. ¶ *By man came also the resurrection of the dead.* The resurrection was first manifested in one, who, by taking part of flesh and blood, Heb. ii. 14, was a man, as to his body, at least; and in that body he exemplified both death and the resurrection of the dead. "Since by man, that is, a human being, sin and death entered into the world; so by man, by one in human nature, came the resurrection of the dead." — *Bloomfield*. As the first man who died was a type of the uni-

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

versal mortality to which the human race is subject, so the first man, whose resurrection to immortality was visibly manifested, was a type of the universal immortality to be bestowed on mankind.

22. *For as in Adam all die.* "Let it be here observed, that the apostle does not say 'As in Adam all died,' six thousand years ago; alluding, as some have understood it, to the total fall and corruption of human nature in the first transgression; but, 'As in Adam all die.' He speaks in the present tense implying a sense in which all are now in Adam. Is there any sense in which all mankind are universally in Adam? We are in Adam by an inheritance of the Adamic or earthly nature. We are in the image of the earthy man. The apostle so explains it in ver. 47-49. In this earthy man, or in the image of the earthy, as exhibited in the first Adam, all die. We are partakers of mortality and death." — *Cobb's Compend*, 312. ¶ *Even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* However much more may be implied in this declaration, it cannot well imply less than a general resurrection of mankind. As all die, like Adam, so shall all be raised, even as Christ is raised. "If Adam is the representative of the animal and mortal nature, Christ is the representative of the spiritual and immortal; and not more universal shall be the death of the perishable than the resurrection of the immortal." — *Thom*. "As in consequence of their relation to Adam all men are born mortal, and at length die; even so, in and by Christ, shall all be made alive." — *Bloomfield*. "All is to be taken without exception, as in Rom. xi. 32; the apostle is not thinking of the fate of the wicked, but of the universal love of God and the universal power of Christ. *Shall be made alive* must, according to the general use of the word, be taken of resurrection to life eternal." — *Stanley*. "By Adam, that is, by natural descent from Adam, forasmuch as the race is

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

derived from Adam, a mortal man. Comp. ver. 54. As Adam was frail and mortal, so also are we born frail and mortal. This law of nature cannot be reversed. In like manner all men shall be recalled to life by Christ, through the power which he received from the Father, John v. 25, 26; 2 Cor. iv. 14. This, therefore, is most fitly interpreted in regard to a universal resurrection, not only of the just, but of the unjust also. Even as we lose the life naturally transmitted to us from Adam, so also by Christ, the Son of God, we shall be supernaturally restored to life from the dead."—*Rosenmuller*. There is no necessity to rely on this passage for proof of the condition into which mankind shall be raised. That proof is found in ver. 24–28, 42–57. See also Matt. xxii. 30–32; Luke xx. 34–38. Their condition may be, and probably is, intimated here; yet the great fact announced is simply that all shall be made alive from the dead. With this we may well be content; especially as the apostle proceeds, in what follows, to disclose fully his ideas of that state into which mankind shall be raised. Some understand the phrase "in Christ," as having the force of "by Christ;" and suppose the meaning to be, "all shall be made alive by the power of Christ." There may be nothing unscriptural in the supposition that power to raise the dead was delegated to Christ, as one of the means by which he should subdue all things unto himself, ver. 27, 28. See John vi. 39. It is not probable, however, that such is the apostle's meaning here; as the parallel or contrast between the two members of the sentence would not thus be complete. It is more probable that Adam and Christ here, as in ver. 45, are placed as the types of the two natures, so to speak, of mankind, and that the meaning is,—as in their animal nature all men die, even so in their spiritual nature shall all be made alive.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put

Through whatever instrumentality it may be accomplished, the resurrection, as much as the original creation, must be recognized as the work of God. The same God who raised up Jesus will raise all others, ch. vi. 14.

23. *But every man in his own order.* The word *τάγματι*, here rendered *order*, is properly a military term, which does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It denotes rank in dignity, rather than order in succession of time. It is derived from the same root and is similar in signification with *τάξις*, which denotes "order, rank, quality, likeness;" as in Heb. v. 6: "A priest after the order of Melchisedec; that is, a priest of the same order, rank, dignity, as Melchisedec."—*Robinson*. In connection with what follows, it has been supposed here to indicate succession of time; namely, that Christ was raised first of all, and his people at a subsequent period. The more probable meaning is that, in the resurrection, Christ is first in dignity, his people being subordinate to him as "the captain of their salvation." Heb. ii. 10. See note at the end of ch. xvi. ¶ *Christ the first-fruits.* That is, first in dignity. See note on ver. 20. ¶ *Afterward.* Subordinate to the highest in dignity. Comp. ch. xii. 28. ¶ *They that are Christ's at his coming.* That is, all men; for all are members of the body of him who is "the head of every man," ch. xi. 3; all are his also by gift, for the Father "hath given all things into his hands," John iii. 35; moreover, all are his by purchase, for he "gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. 6. That the meaning of the phrase "they that are Christ's" is thus broad and comprehensive, is manifest from the fact that, in classifying the "all" named in ver. 22, whether as to dignity or to time, the apostle names only Christ in the one class, and "they that are Christ's" in the other.

24. *Then cometh the end.* Various interpretations have been given of the

down all rule, and all authority and power.

end; but "there is no reason to reject the one adopted by the ancient and most modern expositors, by which *the end* is supposed to mean the end of the world, or of the Christian dispensation, — when Christ shall have gained a complete victory over sin and death, wicked angels and wicked men, and shall resign the government of all things to God the Father, adverted to in the words following, — which Grotius illustrates from the custom of presidents, sent by the Roman emperor to govern provinces; who, at their return, used formally to restore their authority into the hands of their sovereign." — *Blomfield*. A slightly different and probably more correct interpretation is given by *Barnes*: "The word *end* here may refer to the end of human affairs or the end of the kingdoms of this world, or it may refer to the end of the mediatorial kingdom of the Redeemer; the consummation of his peculiar reign and work resulting in the surrender of the kingdom to the Father. The connection demands the *last* interpretation, though this also involves the former." ¶ *When he shall have delivered up, &c.* God committed a special work to his Son, and gave him ample authority for its accomplishment. He exalted him to be a prince as well as a Saviour, gave him a name which is above every name, constituted him the head of a spiritual kingdom, and granted him power over all flesh, that he should impart eternal life to all. At the period here indicated, when this work shall have been fully accomplished, the Son shall resign his delegated power, and surrender this kingdom to the Father from whom he received it. ¶ *When he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.* When he shall have overcome and abolished all which stands opposed to the accomplishment of his peculiar work. Some commentators attempt to define these several terms particularly, and to apply them to certain temporal or spiritual rulers. But the apostle's design seems rather, by this comprehensive phrase, as by

25 For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

the single word *enemies* in ver. 25, to include everything which interposes any obstacle to the perfect and hearty obedience of men to God, — the great object of his mission.

25. *For he must reign.* That the design of God may be executed, and that his object in committing the kingdom to Christ may be fully accomplished, it is necessary that he should reign until all enemies shall be subdued. Hence he will not "deliver up the kingdom to God" until he shall have put down all opposition, ver. 24. This object will not be accomplished until all men shall be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God," Rom. viii. 21, or shall be made alive, in Christ, incorruptible and immortal, ver. 22, 54. The completion of this work, therefore, and the surrender of the kingdom, are necessarily simultaneous. ¶ *Till he hath put all enemies under his feet.* Until all opposition is overcome; until all which interferes with fervent love and cordial obedience to God is destroyed. The apostle is supposed to refer to Ps. ex. 1. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The same prediction is quoted by Jesus, and applied to himself, Matt. xxii. 44, 45. So far as wicked men are here included among the enemies, who are to be put under foot, the nature of their subjection is indicated in ver. 28.

26. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* The words "that" and "is" are supplied by the translators. Others translate, "The last enemy shall be destroyed, death." — *Haweis*. "The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed." — *Doddridge*, and *Macknight*. "And last of his enemies, death, also shall be destroyed." — *Conybeare*. This translation makes the meaning more obvious; namely, that the last enemy being destroyed, no enemy remains. But the common version, though of itself ambiguous, when taken in connection with the context necessarily implies the same idea. All

26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

enemies are to be put under foot, subdued, or destroyed, ver. 25, 28. The last one destroyed must be the last which exists, because, after its destruction, none remain. The *death* here mentioned must be regarded as natural death, because its destruction is accomplished by the resurrection, ver. 54, 55. But spiritual death, the "death" which is "the wages of sin," Rom. vi. 23, must end previously or simultaneously; for such death is an enemy; but after the destruction of natural death by the resurrection, no enemy remains. The same is true in regard to any conceivable enemy to the glory of God or to the happiness of men. All which obstructs their love and obedience is to be destroyed; and death is the last obstruction. "All that should be raised up would live forever; and the effects of sin and rebellion in this world would be thus forever ended, and the kingdom of God restored." — *Barnes*. Nor could "sin and rebellion" then exist in the life to come, after the resurrection. They would then and there be as much opposed to "the kingdom of God," and as inimical to the happiness of God's offspring, as they are now and here. But the last enemy will be destroyed by the resurrection; and neither these nor any other can remain. *Olshausen* acknowledges that this passage "appears favorable to a general restoration." Among the reasons which he assigns for this opinion is the following: "It is only of Christ as the Messiah, as the mediator and expiator, that it can be said that God has put all things under him, that is, that God has surrendered the kingdom to him; and when through his instrumentality all is reconciled, then terminates his kingdom; all are come to God, God is in all, the Redeemer is then only the first-born among many brethren, Rom. viii. 29; or on the other side, those sanctified through him are become like to him, 1 John iii. 2. But the entire course of reasoning seems to have appositeness only as *all*, in the proper sense, is restored. For if a portion

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he

of God's creatures remained excluded from the restoration after God's image, of necessity this portion would need government; to which may be added, that the phrase, 'that God may be all in all,' cannot be strictly interpreted otherwise than so, that in *all* created things God determines all, and accordingly the evil God-resisting will of the creature is banished from existence."

27. *For he hath put all things under his feet.* That is, he hath so determined and ordained. And what God hath thus purposed is sometimes described as already accomplished, inasmuch as its accomplishment is absolutely certain. See note on Rom. iv. 7. The force of this language is more fully exhibited in Heb. ii. 8, 9: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Although the result was not yet fully accomplished in human sight, yet as God had purposed it, and had empowered his Son to execute his design, the apostles did not hesitate to speak of it as an existing fact in the sight of God. It may be observed that the passage quoted from the Epistle to the Hebrews indicates that this universal subjection to Jesus must involve the happiness of the whole human race; else, why "taste death for every man," as one of the means for the accomplishment of the work? See note on ver. 28. ¶ *But when he saith, &c.* When that assurance is given through one speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit. ¶ *It is manifest that he is excepted, &c.* It is obvious that God, who committed the mediatorial kingdom to his Son, and empowered him to reign until all things should be subdued to himself, did not part with his own supreme

saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is expected, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall

be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

sovereignty. He did not make himself subject to his Son. But the Son, in the exercise of this delegated authority, acknowledged his own dependence on the Father, and implored his guidance and assistance.

28. *And when all things shall be subdued unto him.* Equivalent to the putting down of all rule, authority, and power, ver. 24, the putting of all enemies under his feet, ver. 25, the destruction of death, the last enemy, ver. 26, and the putting of all things under his feet, ver. 27. He will reign until all this shall be accomplished. Not until then will he surrender the kingdom to the Father, ver. 24. The nature of this subjection is two-fold. In regard to one class of enemies, or obstacles to the universal prevalence of holiness, such as falsehood, sin, and death, it consists in their absolute destruction. They are no longer to exist. Falsehood shall vanish before the clear blaze of truth; sin shall be abolished and succeeded by holiness; and death shall be "swallowed up in victory," ver. 54, through the resurrection of mankind to immortal life. In regard to intelligent beings, in a state of enmity towards God and holiness, the subjection consists in removing the enmity and converting them into friends; in other words, in bringing them into a state of cordial and entire submission to the divine will. "The enemy is only truly vanquished when he is transformed into a friend; the mere preponderance of power can form no ground of Christ's victory, for that was his from the beginning."—*Olshausen*. To be crushed under the weight of Almighty power, but to remain rebellious and malignant forever, is not, as some suppose, the subjection here intended. The context requires us to understand rather a devout homage and cheerful obedience, such as the Son renders to the Father; for all are to become subject in the same sense

that the Son is subject to the Father. Nothing short of a willing, joyful subjection can be properly understood. "Shall be subdued" and "shall be subject" are but different translations of the same original word. ¶ *Then shall the Son also himself be subject, &c.* He shall "deliver up the kingdom to God, the Father," ver. 24, and surrender the power delegated to him, the object for which it was delegated having been fully accomplished in the salvation of men from sin and their deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. John iii. 16, 17; xvii. 2; Rom. viii. 4. Thenceforth the kingdom of grace will be administered, not through an agent, however exalted in dignity, but directly by the Father. The Son will be one of the subjects of that government; but, though divested of authority, we may well believe he will perpetually retain his pre-eminence above all other created beings. None can doubt that his subjection to the Father will be willing and cordial. It was so when he dwelt on earth, in the midst of trials and distresses; much more in heaven, crowned with glory and honor. Such also in kind, and comparative in degree, will be the subjection of all other intelligent beings, when he shall surrender the kingdom; if any remained in rebellion, they would need government, and would not properly be said to have been subdued, in the manner here indicated; for the subjection of the Son is to be regarded as a sample of the subjection of all others; that is, of the moral condition of all others, by whatever process they may have preserved or attained it. ¶ *That God may be all in all.* Not only that he may be the supreme Ruler of the universe; for such he has been from the beginning. But, rather, that his Spirit may pervade all; that it may meet a willing response in all subordi-

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

nate spirits; and that the great law of love may be supreme in all hearts, producing cheerful and willing obedience. The result of Christ's reign, overcoming all enmity, all opposition, and every obstacle to complete holiness and happiness, before its surrender, has been thus stated: "The especial object of introducing in this place the destruction of power and authority is for the sake of showing that *death*, the king of the human race, will be destroyed in their destruction. The general notion is that, when all the sins and evils for the restraint or punishment of which power and authority exist, shall have been pulled down, then all power and authority, even that of Christ himself, shall end, and fear of the Lord shall be swallowed up in love of the Father." — *Stanley*.

29. *Else what shall they do, &c.* The apostle here resumes the argument, from which he digressed at ver. 23, in order to trace the blessing of the future life up to its original source, even to the Father. On this verse, there are almost as many opinions as commentators. An enumeration would profit little. I offer no opinion of my own, except to say that the following seems as reasonable as any other: "Calmet, in his dissertation upon this verse, gives us twenty-four different senses, which learned men have put upon this remarkable phrase of the apostle St. Paul. Among all these I prefer that which Fr. Junius offered to the world, though it had not the good luck to please Calmet. I think that the most probable meaning of the phrase is to be fetched from Matt. xx. 22; Luke xii. 50; and Mark x. 38; in all which places *to be baptized* signifies to die a violent death by the hands of persecutors. It seems to have been a metaphor taken from the custom of those days in baptizing; for the person baptized went down under the water, and was, as it were, buried

30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?

31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

under it; hence St. Paul says, in Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, that 'they were buried with Christ by baptism.' So that this custom probably gave occasion to our Saviour to express his being to suffer death by the hands of the Jews, in the phrase of a baptism that he was to be baptized with.' And St. Paul seems to have taken up the same phrase with a little variation, but still with the same meaning. In this view of the matter, the phrase may signify literally, 'who are baptized with regard to the dead,' that is, 'such as have been put to death for their belief in Christ.' If we thus understand the words as spoken of persons then dead, what St. Paul says in the next verse will correspond to them the better: 'Why also do we run hazard every hour?' that is, what will become of those who have suffered death for Christ's sake? and why do we who are alive run the hazard of our lives every hour? — Johan. Albertus, in his *Observat. Philolog.* on the New Testament, and Homberg, in his *Parerga Sacra*, have declared for the sense which I have given to the words. But after all, I must acknowledge that this is a passage which I fear will never be sufficiently cleared from all objection." — *Pearce*.

30. *And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?* That is, why do we constantly expose our lives, "if the dead rise not at all?" ver. 29. Paul speaks particularly of himself, perhaps also including his associate apostles. His argument is obvious. Unless we have satisfactory assurance of a future life, what object can we have in preaching Jesus and the resurrection, at the hazard of our lives? If there be no resurrection, common prudence would require us to abandon our labors, and make our peace with unbelievers. See ver. 32.

31. *I protest by your rejoicing, &c.* "I protest by my very boasting thereof, which I make not in myself, but in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Master." —

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if

the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.

33 Be not deceived: evil com-

Conybeare. "The meaning of the phrase, which is admitted by all to be obscure, is probably, I protest, or solemnly declare, by the glorying or exultation which I have on your account; by all my ground of glorying in you; by all the confident boasting and expectation which I have of your salvation." — *Barnes.* The expression is a strong asseveration, in the form of an oath. ¶ *I die daily.* I am in constant peril of death. Equivalent to "in deaths oft," 2 Cor. xi. 23.

32. *If after the manner of men, &c.* If, speaking after the manner of men, I have fought, &c. That is, if I have contended with infuriated men, who are often metaphorically styled "beasts." If my life has been in peril under circumstances which men are accustomed to describe as contests with wild beasts. ¶ *I have fought with beasts at Ephesus.* Some commentators understand this phrase literally, and suppose that Paul was actually exposed to wild beasts at Ephesus, on some occasion not recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Others understand it metaphorically, and suppose he refers to the circumstance recorded in Acts xix. 21-41, when a mob, furious as savage beasts, was ready to sacrifice his life. That the language is metaphorical, and refers to some such tumult, is very probable; but it may be doubted whether this particular "uproar" occurred before the date of this epistle, inasmuch as it was written at Ephesus, whence Paul was apparently driven by the mob. "Against its being literal, is, (1) The improbability of such a punishment for Paul as a Roman citizen, or of his escaping from it, had he been exposed to it. (2) The omission of it in Acts xix. 9-41, when, if at all, it must have taken place, and what is of more consequence, in 2 Cor. xi. 24-28, where so remarkable a danger could hardly have been passed over. (3) The fact that the tumult of Acts xix. 29-41 took place, not in the Roman *amphitheatre*, but in the Greek *theatre*, where such exhibitions were not usual.

(4) The undoubted use of such words metaphorically, from the familiarity of the image of the gladiatorial combats, as in ch. iv. 9, a 'spectacle to angels and men,' appointed last; 2 Tim. iv. 17, 'That I may be saved from the mouth of the lion.'" — *Stanley.* Had Paul literally been exposed to wild beasts, as a punishment for his devotion to the gospel, or as one of the trials which he endured in the prosecution of his ministry, it is utterly inconceivable why he should omit to mention it distinctly in his general enumeration of his labors and trials, 2 Cor. xi. 23-28. He mentions particular instances of scourging and imprisonment, of hunger, and thirst, and cold, by which his life was not in imminent peril; and why omit the most extreme hazard to which he had been exposed? But if he speaks of men metaphorically as beasts, and refers to the danger of being torn in pieces by a mob, then this circumstance may be easily understood as included among the perils "among mine own countrymen, — by the heathen, — in the city, — in the wilderness." ¶ *What advantageth it me, &c.* What benefit can I propose to myself from such hazards? What good can I accomplish, which may be a source of comfort to me? "If the dead rise not," my preaching is vain, and the faith wrought in my hearers is vain, ver. 14; in which case I could not enjoy the consciousness that I had benefited others at the cost of so much pain and hazard to myself. Why then expose myself to such suffering and peril, which might be avoided by silence and inactivity? ¶ *Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.* These words are quoted from Isa. xxii. 13, but are generally supposed to refer to the Epicurean philosophy. If there be no future life, it were well to make the most of the present; to enjoy the greatest degree of happiness of which we are capable, and avoid pain as far as may be possible. If death be a final sleep, it is unwise to precipitate the event, by exposing ourselves to

munications corrupt good manners.

34 Awake to righteousness,

unnecessary danger. We may better prolong life by the utmost care and circumspection.

33. *Be not deceived.* That is, by false teachers, who lead you astray from the truth, and who unsettle your faith in the resurrection of mankind. Whether the teaching were by a Jewish Sadducee or by a Grecian philosopher, it was probably urged on some plausible pretext or some philosophical doubt, such as the question to our Lord, Matt. xxii. 23-28, or that which is mentioned in ver. 35, or some other of kindred character. Against all such, they should be on their guard. The resurrection of the dead was not taught as a philosophical speculation; philosophy had failed to discover it. It was taught as a fact of revelation, confirmed and demonstrated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; it should therefore be embraced through faith, not to be disturbed by "oppositions of science falsely so called." 1 Tim. vi.

20. ¶ *Evil communications corrupt good manners.* The word rendered *communications* "signifies not only discourses, but every kind of familiar intercourse. And therefore, as Alberti observes, the phrase might be translated *bad company*. The persons, whose company the apostle desired the Corinthians to shun, were those who reasoned against the immortality of the soul and a future state." — *Macknight*. St. Paul here quotes a line from the *Thais*, a comedy of Menander's: the line had probably passed into a proverbial expression. We see from this passage, that the free-thinking party at Corinth joined immoral practice with their licentious doctrine; and that they were corrupted by the evil example of their heathen neighbors." — *Conybear*. The corruption, however, of which the apostle speaks, was probably of doctrine rather than of morals, as in 2 Cor. ii. 17, and especially a corruption of the doctrine of the resurrection, to which this whole chapter is devoted.

34. *Awake to righteousness.* The

and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.

word ἐκνήφω, here translated *awake*, is defined to "sober out, to become sober out of drunkenness," and figuratively, "to rouse up, to awake from a state of delusion and torpor." — *Robinson*. Under the teaching of those who "knew not the Scriptures nor the power of God," Matt. xxii. 29, as it also follows in this verse, they had been mentally intoxicated and besotted, so that they lost faith in the resurrection of mankind, though continuing to acknowledge the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ver. 12. From this "state of delusion and stupor" the apostle exhorts them to arouse. In this verse, as in ver. 33, the reference is to faith rather than to works. Conversion from sin to holiness is elsewhere urged; but the object here is to revive in the minds of his brethren a living faith in the resurrection from the dead. The adverb, rendered to *righteousness* signifies "rightly, justly, — in the right way as one ought." — *Robinson*. Hence *Macknight* translates "awake, as is fit;" and *Bloomfield*, "awake, as it is right you should."

¶ *And sin not.* The peculiar sin here indicated is that of opposition or wilful blindness to the truth. See John iii. 19; 2 Tim. iii. 8; iv. 4. Beware, lest ye "fall into the errors which have been above adverted to." — *Bloomfield*. Shake off the delusion in which you have been sleeping, and no longer close your eyes against the truth revealed from heaven and demonstrated by the resurrection of our Lord. "Awake, therefore, as becomes righteous and good men, from the intoxications of such wild and delusive dreams as these; and sin not in supporting or countenancing doctrines so subversive of the Christian faith and hope." — *Doddridge*. ¶ *For some have not the knowledge of God.* The original phrase is stronger than the translation. It is more literally rendered by *Haweis*, "for some have an ignorance of God." They were not only destitute of true knowledge, but entertained opinions absolutely erroneous, questioning the

35 But some *man* will say, and with what body do they
How are the dead raised up? come?

power of God to raise the dead, as in ver. 35. "Such of the Corinthians as denied the resurrection and a future state showed great ignorance, both of God's character as moral Governor of the world, and of his perfections, especially his power and goodness set forth in the works of creation." — *Macknight*. To deny the resurrection on philosophical grounds betrays an erroneous conception of divine power. Matt. xxii. 23. ¶ *I speak this to your shame*. The heathen, to whom this resurrection has not been revealed, have an excuse for their ignorance which will not avail you. Such abundant evidence of the fact has been exhibited to you, through the preaching of those whose mission was authenticated by miraculous "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," ch. ii. 4, that your ignorance is actually disgraceful.

35. *But some man will say, &c.* The character of the questions here stated, and answered in the subsequent verses, is perspicuously exhibited by *Bloomfield*. "The apostle now proceeds to notice two objections, which were probably often urged, in the form of questions, to the doctrine of the resurrection; for, as *Gerdesius* shows, the Corinthian adversaries, like cavillers in general, sought to overturn the doctrine of the resurrection by puzzling questions. So here it is objected by way of interrogation, *how can* all the different parts of our bodies, which have been resolved into dust, or apparently annihilated by fire, or devoured by beasts, or have become so mingled with and converted into the nature of other animals, nay, of trees, plants, &c.,—how can these, after having been for so many ages thus dissipated, be at length united, and coalesce into one body? If that be possible, with *what kind* of body are the dead to rise? These objections the apostle shows proceed from folly; and he introduces a popular illustration of the doctrine, derived from what subsists in plants. It is plain, however, from the air of the words, that, as *Gerdesius* shows,

the objectors intended, by the moving of questions and starting of difficulties, not so much to ask the *manner* in which the resurrection of the body was to be effected, as (by an idiom common in our language) civilly to deny its possibility." Similar in character, though different in form, was the question proposed to our Lord, Matt. xxii. 23-32. Such questions are often heard even now. ¶ *How are the dead raised up?* This question seems to be levelled at the *possibility* of the resurrection, as the next is at its *manner*, if possible. How can God reorganize the human body after it has been chemically decomposed, and its particles have returned to their elementary condition of earth, and water, and air? How can he collect and rearrange the particles of the body, when, as sometimes occurs, they are widely scattered? How can he suitably arrange those particles which may, at different times, have entered into the composition of two or more bodies? Such and similar questions would readily occur to the philosophic Greek, and they have been repeated in all ages. ¶ *And with what body do they come?* Shall it be composed of all the particles which at any time formed a part of the human body, or only of those which remained at death? Shall it be an exact pattern of the present body, or otherwise? If the same, shall it resemble the body in its youth or old age, in health or in its appearance at the moment of death? The character of all such subtle questions, and the appropriate manner of meeting them, which manner was in fact adopted by the apostle, are clearly stated by *Stanley*: "The difficulty, from whatever quarter it came, arose from the too literal and material conception of the resurrection; and the apostle answers it by pointing out the greatness of the change necessarily effected by death, and the consequent impossibility of transferring our notions of this life to that which is to come. It must therefore be borne in mind, that what the apostle is endeavoring to establish is,

36 *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die :

37 And that which thou sow-

not the *identity*, but the *change* of existence; not 'the resurrection of the body' (a phrase which never occurs in the New Testament), but the resurrection simply." Precisely the same course was adopted by our Lord, in his answer to the Sadducees, Matt. xxii. 29-32, showing the difference between the circumstances of the present and of the future life. For some general remarks on the resurrection, see note at the end of ch. xvi.

36. *Thou fool.* "Foolish, inconsiderate man."—*Barnes.* Our Lord called the Pharisees *fools*, Luke xi. 40, because their conduct indicated such ignorance or disregard of the divine character. So the apostle here gives the same appellation to those whose "ignorance of God," ver. 34, and of his power, was manifested in such questions. See Matt. xxii. 29. The word here indicates not only ignorance, but a foolish ignorance; an ignorance which an attentive observation of what was constantly passing before their eyes might remove. They questioned the possibility of a resurrection, because the human body died and became decomposed. Yet they were accustomed to the natural process of vegetation, not one whit less wonderful and indicative of divine power. If they really doubted the sufficiency of power in the one case while they constantly witnessed it in the other, it was surely a foolish doubt. ¶ *That which thou sowest, &c.* The seed which you cast into the ground, in full faith and expectation of a harvest, dies and is decomposed, as one of the conditions of vegetation. So long as it retains its original form and condition, there is no manifestation of new life. But when decomposition commences, the germ of life is quickened and developed, and a new body springs from the old. As in parables, so in this illustration, we are not to seek an exact correspondence in every particular. The leading idea, which is the only

est, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain* :

one of essential importance, is that there is such an analogy between the resurrection and the ordinary process of vegetation, that this objection against the one would be equally strong against the other; and that while it is known to be without foundation in regard to the one, it is sheer folly to urge it in regard to the other. In both cases, the death and decomposition of the old organization attends the development of the new. If the process of vegetation had never been witnessed, it would appear as wonderful and improbable as the resurrection of the dead, and equally beyond the reach of divine power.

37. *And that which thou sowest, &c.* The seed, of whatever kind. Some understand this verse as a continuation of the reply to the first objection, namely, in regard to the *possibility* of a resurrection; but others, with apparently better reason, regard it as an answer to the second objection, in regard to its *manner*; "with what body do they come?" ¶ *Thou sowest not that body that shall be, &c.* The seed sown is not raised up again bodily, in precisely the same form, with the exact number of its original particles, no less and no more. The plant which springs up has an essential connection with the seed sown, yet is in many respects far different from it. "Bare grain," the naked seed, whether "of wheat or of some other grain," is cast into the ground and is decomposed. But this "is not that body that shall be," consisting of roots, stalks, leaves, blossoms, and fruit. A great change is wrought. While, in one respect, there is an inseparable connection between the two, to a certain extent identifying them, there is yet a marvellous difference between them, both in form and substance.

38. *But God giveth it a body, &c.* God organizes the plant which springs up. Though the original organization be decomposed, and few of its parti-

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but *there is one kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

cles pass into the new, yet the new organization becomes perfect by the divine energy, operating through what are styled natural laws. It should never be forgotten, that through whatever instrumentalities results are accomplished, the power or moving force must be traced ultimately to God, as its original source. ¶ *As it hath pleased him.* The infinite diversity in the forms of plants was established by the Creator of all, according to his own good pleasure. ¶ *And to every seed his own body.* The body appropriate to its kind. Wheat does not produce rye; nor oats, barley. Each produces its own kind. However different in form "the body that shall be" may be from "that which thou sowest," ver. 37, it is nevertheless appropriate to it, kindred in character, and essentially connected with it.

39. *All flesh is not the same flesh.* Not only is there such a diversity in the vegetable kingdom, but there are also differences of organization among animals. These differ from each other in form, and in some of their qualities; yet they are composed of essentially the same elements. Each is fitted for the special condition assigned to it. Whether designed to live on the land, or in the water, or in the air, the organization is adapted to its proper place. And in each class, there is great variety, from the stupid shellfish to the half-reasoning elephant (not to speak of man), and from the most loathsome reptile to the most perfect and beautiful animal form. The argument is, if God can give such variety of form to animals constituted of essentially the same elements, can he not as easily give a new and perfect form in the resurrection? Has he entirely exhausted his creative or his fashioning power?

40 *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is another.

41 *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the

40. *There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, &c.* By celestial bodies the apostle is generally understood to refer to the sun, moon, and stars; and by bodies terrestrial, to the various material forms on earth, whether animate or inanimate. Some, however, suppose the reference is to men exclusively, distinguished as to their present and future forms. The general idea is sufficiently plain. Forms are infinitely diversified, both on earth and in the visible heavens; and all these differ in comparative glory.

41. *There is one glory of the sun, &c.* The glory or splendor of the sun exceeds that of the moon; the moon outshines the stars; and of the stars, some are brighter than others. Among these heavenly bodies a difference is perceivable, similar to that by which earthly bodies are distinguished. The implied argument in ver. 39-41 is well stated by *Bloomfield*: "In this passage, the apostle, proceeding in his confutation of the objections of his adversaries as to the quality of the bodies to be raised, employs an illustration of what he has been saying, and that by similitude. His main purpose is to inculcate, directly and expressly, the important truth which, at ver. 37, 38, he had only intimated, as it were by implication; namely, that the raised body, though in all essential points the same with the body buried, would be very different and far more excellent. Accordingly the argument is this: that is, throughout the whole works of the creation, whether earthly, or heavenly, animate or inanimate, a great difference subsists between the bodies of one class, as compared with those of another class, and even those of the same class differing widely; such, ver. 42, will be the case here; so will be the difference, at the

stars; for *one* star differeth from *another* star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in cor-

ruption, between the bodies which shall arise, as compared with those that were committed to the earth." In regard to the difference in glory between the several heavenly bodies mentioned, "Calvin has very judiciously remarked that the scope of the apostle's argument was not to show that, according to the degree of sanctification attained by individual believers, the character of their glorified body and the degree of its glorification would vary; he intended only to express the difference between the body of the resurrection and this contemptible body." — *Olshausen*.

42. *So also is the resurrection of the dead.* In like manner. The reference, as is manifest from the following phraseology, is particularly to ver. 36-38, and more generally to ver. 30-41. As the grain, cast into the earth does not utterly perish, though its particles be decomposed, but the germ of life is preserved, and quickened, and springs up clothed in a more glorious form, so also in the resurrection the spiritual body shall be far more glorious than the natural body. The same God who is able to organize all variety of bodies in the visible universe is also able to clothe his children in appropriate bodies in the resurrection. ¶ *It is sown in corruption.* The verbs, rendered *sown* and *raised*, in ver. 42-44, have no expressed nominative; nor is it easy to select any one word which will fully express the idea, which I take to be this: the natural body dies, and a spiritual body is raised in a more glorious condition. "This indeterminate meaning is best rendered, 'There is a sowing,' 'There is a raising.' Throughout this parallel, the image of the verb is taken from the seed; the image of the substantives is taken from the variety of visible organizations." — *Stanley*. The natural body is corruptible, liable to decay, in a state of corruption. Such is the body which dies, or, according to the metaphor in the text, is *sown*. ¶ *It*

is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown

is raised in incorruption. The spiritual body shall be incorruptible, no more liable to decay or death. "Neither can they die any more," is the declaration of our Lord, Luke xx. 36. This, then, is one characteristic of the spiritual body, in which it is different from the natural body. It shall be free from mortality and all its ills. That God *can* thus change the form, or fashion a more excellent body, is shown in ver. 37, 38: it is here asserted that he *will* do it.

43. *It is sown in dishonour.* Most commentators suppose the apostle refers to the condition of the body after death, when it becomes offensive and loathsome through putrefaction. I think, however, he rather refers to its condition while living, being the seat of sinful passions, and of the temptations which arise from the bodily appetites and propensities. See note on Rom. vi. 6. The apostle declares the body to be dishonored by sin, Rom. i. 24. And in reference to the dishonor of the body as the seat of sinful passions as well as the instrument through which they are manifested, I suppose he styles it a *vile* body in a kindred passage: "The Lord Jesus Christ — shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. iii. 20, 21. Such is the natural body which dies. ¶ *It is raised in glory.* In honor, as contrasted with the dishonor of the natural body. The spiritual body shall be free from sin, and consequently glorious. "The word glory means dignity, splendor, honor, excellence, perfection; and is here used as denoting the combination of all those things which shall rescue it from ignominy and disgrace." — *Barnes*. ¶ *It is sown in weakness.* The natural body is weak, subject to manifold infirmities and diseases, and incapable of successfully resisting not merely the inroads constantly made upon it by sickness or outward injuries, but its own inherent tendency to de-

in weakness, it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body,

cay, which surely terminates in death, if not anticipated by some other cause.

¶ *It is raised in power.* The spiritual body is powerful, because not subject to the infirmities through which the natural body is weak; "no more liable to weakness, through labor; decay, by age; wasting, by disease; and dissolution, by death." — *Clarke.*

44. *It is sown a natural body, &c.*

"A natural body, *σῶμα ψυχικόν*, is, as the name implies, not simply the dead corpse, but 'a body animated by the principle of animal life;' according to the threefold division of human nature taken by St. Paul partly from the Aristotelian phraseology, partly from the new ideas of Christianity. See 1 Thess. v. 23. The expression here is introduced to explain the contrast with the 'spiritual body,' *σῶμα πνευματικόν*, or 'the organization which is animated by the Divine life breathed into it by the Spirit of God.'" — *Stanley.* "This word *natural* denotes properly that which is endowed with *animal* life, having breath or vitality. The word from which it is derived (*χυχή*) denotes properly the breath; vital breath; the soul, as the vital principle; the animal soul, or the vital spirit; the soul, as the seat of the sentient desires, passions, and propensities; and then a living thing, an animal. It may be applied to *any* animal, or any living thing, whether brutes or men. It is distinguished from the soul or spirit (*πνεῦμα*) inasmuch as that more commonly denotes the *rational* spirit, the immortal soul, that which thinks, reasons, reflects," &c. — *Barnes.* "By an *animal body* the Greek commentators understood a body, to the animation of which the presence of an animal soul is necessary; and by a *spiritual body*, a body of so fine a texture, that it will be supported merely by the presence of our rational spirit. In any other sense, a spiritual body seems a contradiction in terms." — *Macknight.* The general idea, embraced in this contrast, appears to be this: the rational soul, what properly con-

stitutes the individual, now dwells in a body endowed with animal functions only, such as are common to other animals, and subject to all the wants, infirmities, inconveniences, diseases, and to the final dissolution, which are characteristic of the animal creation generally; in the resurrection, the rational soul shall be clothed with a body of far different organization, free from the imperfections which inhere in the natural body, permanent and indestructible, similar to the bodies of angels. Luke xx. 36. Such is the change wrought by the resurrection, transforming our "vile body" into the likeness of Christ's glorious body. Phil. ii. 21. "The natural body is an organism fitted for the development and action of the animal man; the spiritual body is an organism fitted for the development and action of the spiritual nature; and the spiritual body holds to the natural body a relation which is emblemed by that which the most glorious of nature's forms bears to the seed from which it springs." — *Thom.* Thus, as the seed sown is "not that body that shall be," ver. 37, but contains a germ of life which shall be developed in a more glorious form, so the body which dies is not precisely the body with which men "come" in the resurrection, ver. 35, but it is inhabited by a rational spirit which shall be clothed in a more glorious form. By these several contrasts, ver. 42-44, exhibiting the vast circumstantial difference between the body which dies and the body which exists in the resurrection, though a substantial identity remain, like that between the "bare grain" and the springing plant, the apostle effectually silenced all objections founded on the supposed difficulty of rearranging the widely-scattered particles of matter. See note on ver. 35. ¶ *There is a natural body, &c.* This is an emphatic reiteration of what has already been stated. Having asserted the transformation to be wrought, the apostle asserts that the spiritual body actually exists, no less

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

than the natural. The natural body was manifest to all; the spiritual was revealed, and might be confidently expected.

45. *And so it is written.* See Gen. ii. 7. The first part of the verse is quoted, with an addition of the words *first and Adam*. ¶ *The first man Adam was made a living soul.* He was constituted a living creature; an animated being; a person enjoying animal life. The word ψυχῆ here rendered *soul* ordinarily denotes natural life, "the vital breath, Lat. *anima*, life, through which the body lives and feels, that is, the principle of life manifested in the breath;" and hence in a concrete form, "a living thing, an animal."—*Robinson*. See note on Matt. xvi. 26. "This is precisely the idea which Paul uses here, that the first man was made an animated being, by having breathed into him the breath of life, Gen. ii. 7, and that it is the image of this animated or vital being which we bear, ver. 48. Neither Moses nor Paul deny that, in addition to this, man was endowed with a rational soul, an immortal nature; but that is not the idea which they present in the passage in Genesis which Paul quotes."—*Barnes*. Adam is here put as the representative of the existence of the animal body, or natural body, as he is also as the representative of its death, in ver. 22. ¶ *The last Adam was made a quickening spirit.* This is the only place in the New Testament where Christ is denominated Adam; but the two are elsewhere compared, Christ being the spiritual head of the human race as Adam was its natural head, and the medium through whom richer blessings are bestowed than were forfeited by Adam. So here, as Adam is put as the representative of human mortality, Christ is put as the representative of immortal life, ver. 22. Adam was an animated being, subject to death. Christ is a life-giving Spirit, both

46 Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man *is* of the

possessing and communicating life; not merely a Spirit enjoying life, but a Spirit giving life to others. Our Lord is often represented as the medium through whom spiritual life, moral life, divine life, the life of holiness, is communicated to men. But the apostle here speaks of the life-giving spirit, in contrast with the perishing nature of the first Adam; the representative of immortal spiritual bodies, in contrast with the mortal animal body of Adam.

46. *Howbeit that was not first, &c.* The apostle here speaks of priority, not of existence, but of bodily manifestation. He does not say that Adam existed before Christ; but that the animal body of Adam was manifested, as the sample of a mortal existence, before the spiritual body of Christ was manifested, as a sample of immortal existence. According to the established order, mankind must first bear the image of the earthy, before being transformed into the image of the heavenly, ver. 49. The reference is to ver. 44, rather than to ver. 45.

47. *The first man.* Equivalent to "the first man, Adam," ver. 45. ¶ *Is of the earth, earthy.* Such was the character of the first created natural body, and such remains the character of all bodies made in its image. The original expresses the perishable nature of the animal body more emphatically than the translation; the word rendered *earthy* indicates the "dust of the ground" from which the body was formed, Gen. ii. 7. See also Gen. iii. 19. Such a body is necessarily frail and mortal, according to the established laws of nature, which, however, is but another phrase to denote the laws of God. ¶ *The second man.* Unquestionably meaning Christ, as in ver. 45. The *second* man, being a type of the universal spiritual condition of mankind, as the *first* man was a type or sample of their univer-

earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and

as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall

sal natural condition. ¶ *The Lord from heaven.* Many ancient MSS. omit the word rendered *Lord*, and the Vulgate has, "the second man from heaven is heavenly." This forms a more perfect contrast with the former clause, yet the sense remains essentially the same, whether the word "Lord" be retained or rejected, as the reference to Christ is perfectly obvious. "Although this need not imply more than our Lord's divine origin generally, as in John iii. 13, yet the precision of the contrast seems to point to something more particular, as, for example, his miraculous birth; unless, indeed, it refers to the heavenly organization assumed by him since his resurrection." — *Stanley.* The principal idea, however, designed to be embraced in this verse, as it may be gathered from the context, seems to be this: — As the first man, Adam, was of earthly origin, and was clothed with a body formed of the "dust of the ground," a natural body, fitted to his earthly condition, so Christ, being of heavenly origin, was clothed with a spiritual body, fitted to his heavenly condition.

48. As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also, &c. All the descendants of Adam, the "earthy" man, partake of his nature; they are in like condition; they dwell in "earthy," corruptible bodies, natural bodies, bodies subject to infirmity, passion, and death. ¶ *And as is* the heavenly, such *are* they also, &c. All men, being raised in Christ, ver. 22, shall partake of his nature, become like him, ver. 49, and be clothed in bodies resembling his glorious body. See Phil. iii. 21. It may be observed that, in the Greek, no verb is found in this verse. A literal translation is, "as the earthy, such also the earthy; and as the heavenly, such also the heavenly." Our translators inserted verbs, all in the present tense; others, with equally good right, have inserted other words: "Such a body as Adam himself had, such have

all we mortal men; and such a body as Christ now hath, such shall we that live like him, according to his example and precept, have at the resurrection." — *Hammond.*

49. *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, &c.* In this verse, the apostle asserts, concerning all, what he describes in ver. 48. He there says that all who are earthy resemble the first earthy man; and that all the heavenly shall resemble the heavenly man, Christ Jesus. He here applies that description to all men; for all die, and all live again, ver. 22. All who have lived "have borne the image of the earthy," and all who may hereafter live on earth will bear the same image. All who "shall be made alive" "shall also bear the image of the heavenly;" and the resurrection shall be as extensive and as universal as death, ver. 22; else how shall death be destroyed and swallowed up in victory? ver. 26, 54. "And as we have borne and do bear in our bodies the image or characteristics of the earthy man, Adam, namely, in frailty, sin, sorrow, and death: so shall we, at the resurrection, bear the stamp of the heavenly man, Christ, resembling him in our glorified and immortal frames." — *Bloomfield.* "And as our first body partakes of all the qualities of its earthly parentage, our second body, depositing all its weakness and infirmities, shall be arrayed in all the glorious qualities of its heavenly one." — *Gilpin.* Probably the apostle's chief design here was to exhibit the difference between the "natural body" and the "spiritual body," the body which now is and the body with which we shall be invested in the resurrection; but certain other very important facts are involved in his language. This is clearly perceived by *Barnes*, who says: "The *argument* here is, that the connection which is formed between the believer and the Saviour is as close as that which subsisted be-

also bear the image of the heavenly.

tween him and Adam; and as that connection with Adam involved the certainty that he would be subjected to pain, sin, sickness, and death, so the connection with Christ involves the certainty that he will, like him, be free from sin, sickness, pain, and death, and like him will have a body that is pure, incorruptible, and immortal." As all enmity is to be eradicated from the universe, and all intelligent beings brought into a state of cordial subjection before Christ surrenders his kingdom, ver. 24-28, we can scarcely suppose that any will then remain in unbelief. We may rather confidently trust that as all dwell in natural bodies on the earth, so in the resurrection shall all be invested with spiritual bodies, and be made joint-partakers of the benefits resulting from such a glorious change. Such is certainly the obvious idea running through this whole description of the resurrection. See note at the end of ch. xvi.

50. *Now this I say, brethren, &c.* The general meaning and object of the language in this verse is well stated by *Locke*: "This I say to you, brethren, to satisfy those that ask, 'with what bodies the dead shall come?' that we shall not at the resurrection have such bodies as we have now; for flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom which the saints shall inherit in heaven; nor are such fleeting, corruptible things, as our present bodies are, fitted to that state of immutable incorruptibility." This is one of the very few passages in the New Testament, if indeed it be not the only one, in which the phrase "kingdom of God" clearly indicates the spiritual condition of the future life. Ordinarily, kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom simply, denote a state of things on the earth, popularly styled the gospel dispensation. See note on Matt. iii. 2. At the resurrection, when Christ surrenders his delegated authority, God becomes "all in all," exercises his authority without the intervention of any subordinate ruler, and the spiritual

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot in-

universe becomes emphatically "the kingdom of God," ver. 24-28. ¶ *Flesh and blood.* This phrase denotes the present condition of the human body. The ancient commentators understood it to indicate the sinful passions of men; but by the moderns this interpretation is almost universally rejected. The apostle is not here discussing the moral character of mankind, except by implication; the manner of the resurrection, "with what body they come," is his special theme. And he here declares the great fact that the animal body is not fitted for a purely spiritual existence. ¶ *Can not inherit.* Cannot enjoy; cannot enter into possession. The joys of the future life, as well as spiritual blessings in the present, are represented as an inheritance, and mankind as heirs. Rom. viii. 17; Eph. i. 11, 14; 1 Pet. i. 4. ¶ *The kingdom of God.* The spiritual existence; the state of purity and glory in the future life; in one word, heaven; where God reigns forever in undivided glory, over a universe of willing and obedient subjects. ¶ *Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* Rather, neither can corruption inherit incorruption. The denial is as absolute as in the preceding clause. That which is in its own nature subject to corruption and dissolution is not adapted to a spiritual incorruptible condition, and cannot attain it until it shall undergo a change, such as is described in the foregoing verses. The words "are exoetical of the preceding: It is not possible, I say, for these fleshly, corruptible, and mortal frames to enjoy a place fitted for incorruptible and immortal beings."—*Bloomfield.* The reason of this impossibility the apostle does not state; but he does state the fact; and this was all which was necessary to his purpose, namely, to show that the objections in ver. 35, to which he replies, were founded on an erroneous conception of the future life, like that of the Sadducees, Matt. xxii. 29, 30. The seed sown is not precisely the body that shall be, ver. 37; nor is the "natural body" which

herit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mys-

teries precisely the "spiritual body" of the resurrection. All abstruse and puzzling questions, therefore, concerning the disposition of certain particles of matter are as impertinent and groundless as those concerning the relative claims of seven husbands to the same wife, proposed by the Sadducees.

51. In the previous verses, I apprehend, the apostle completes his description of the resurrection of the dead. He here enters upon the discussion of a new subject, intimately connected with the other, yet different, and heretofore a "mystery," or a doctrine not known to the Corinthians. Paul had previously preached to them the resurrection of the dead; but, as it would seem, he now, for the first time, describes to them the change which shall pass upon the living, who "remain unto the coming of the Lord." 1 Thes. iv. 15. ¶ *Behold, I shew you a mystery.* I announce to you a fact which you have not heretofore known. This is the scriptural sense of *mystery*; not a truth unintelligible when known, but a truth previously hidden and concealed. See note on ch. ii. 7. Generally, in the Scriptures, it indicates a truth which human reason has not only not ascertained, but is incapable of ascertaining; at the same time, a truth easily comprehended and understood when revealed. Such is its meaning here. Human reason had never conceived such a change as the apostle makes known by revelation; yet when it was made known, it might be grasped by the reason, and perceived to remove entirely the objections which had been urged against a future life. ¶ *We shall not all sleep.* We shall not all die. Speaking in the name of the whole human race, or as a member of the great human family, Paul says, we shall not indeed *all* die, thus qualifying the declaration in ver. 22, that death reigns over all men. Those who shall be living "at the last

trump; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:

trump," ver. 52, will form an exception to the general rule. Yet this exception, as he proceeds to say, will be rather in form than in substance; for substantially the same change will pass upon all men without exception. ¶ *But we shall all be changed.* Though some should not die, yet they must undergo a change equivalent to that which is wrought on others through death and the resurrection. Inasmuch as "flesh and blood" cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," ver. 50, it follows that "all must be changed" as the condition of entering upon that glorious inheritance. The "change" is indispensable to all, in whatever manner wrought, and at whatever time; so that whether men die and are raised, which is the general fact, or whether they be found living and "be caught up—to meet the Lord in the air," 1 Thes. iv. 17, which is the exceptional fact, they will enter the future life in a like condition, in incorruption, glory, and power, and invested with spiritual bodies, ver. 42-44.

52. *In a moment.* Literally, *in an atom*, ἀτόμῳ; "uncut, not to be cut, indivisible; in the New Testament, of time, an atom, a moment."—*Robinson.* The idea is, that the change is instantaneous, not to be measured by the minutest division of time. ¶ *In the twinkling of an eye.* An emphatic repetition of the idea, that "the living shall be changed, and it will be in an undivided point of time, by a process not like the slow corruption and decay of death, but sudden, rapid, divine."—*Stanley.* Nothing can be conceived more sudden and instantaneous than the glance or twinkling of the eye, which shines forth like the lightning, or even the winking of the eye, which does not perceptibly obscure the vision. Thus sudden, thus instantaneous, the apostle declares shall be the change which shall pass on the living. ¶ *At the last trump.*

for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The metaphor is taken from the Jewish custom of sounding a trumpet as a signal, on great and important occasions. See note on Matt. xxiv. 31. "The expression is, of course, to be understood figuratively of a stupendous spiritual influence, which arouses mankind for some mighty purpose."—*Olshausen*. In the Old Testament, a like figure is familiar, denoting some extraordinary manifestation of the Divine energy. "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." Ps. xlvi. 5. "The Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrows shall go forth as the lightning; and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the South." Zech. ix. 14. Thus here, Paul represents the instantaneous change of all who may then be living as ushered in by the sound of a trumpet. ¶ *For the trumpet shall sound.* This phrase, together with the remainder of the verse is parenthetical, and is so marked by Griesbach, Knapp, and Bloomfield. To give the stronger emphasis to his declaration, the apostle, before describing the character of the change, re-affirms these facts previously stated; namely, the sounding of the trumpet, the resurrection of the dead in incorruption, and the equivalent change of the living. The change wrought on the living, he asserts, shall be simultaneous with the sounding of the trumpet, ver. 51, 52; but it does not follow, nor is it asserted, that the resurrection of the dead is simultaneous with both, or either. The fact of the resurrection is asserted and argued throughout this chapter, to ver. 50, but without any definite reference to the precise time; and in this verse the same fact is emphatically reaffirmed, in the same indefinite manner in regard to time. In my judgment, the apostle affirms no more in this parenthesis than he had before affirmed. ¶ *And the dead shall be raised incorruptible.* See notes on ver. 42, 54. ¶ *And we*

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

shall be changed. See note on ver. 51. Because the resurrection of the dead and the change wrought on the living are thus mentioned in juxtaposition, it does not follow that they are simultaneous. Indeed, the apostle expressly declares, 1 Thess. iv. 16, that the resurrection shall be completed previously to the change of the living; and this is the only definite indication of time, in either place. See note at the end of ch. xvi.

53. *For this corruptible must put on, &c.* See note on ver. 50. Paul declares, ver. 50, that the mortal body cannot pass into the future life, nor corruption inherit incorruption. He had previously described the change, by which those who die and are raised from the dead are fitted for the enjoyment of that life, ver. 42-44. He now describes the corresponding change which must be wrought in the living. The metaphor here used, of *putting on* as a garment, has been understood by some to imply that incorruption and immortality shall be superadded to the mortal body. But the obvious idea, as indicated by the context, and as almost unanimously agreed by commentators, is simply that this corruptible must become incorruptible, and this mortal must become immortal. The change must be essentially the same as that which is described more in detail, ver. 42-44. None but spiritual, incorruptible bodies are fitted to the future life.

54. *So when this corruptible shall have put on, &c.* When this change shall have been wrought in those who remain alive "at the last trump," and shall thus have become universal, having been previously wrought in those who have been raised from the dead. It is observable that the verb rendered "shall have put on" is in the same tense as the verb rendered "shall be raised" in ver. 52; and hence if it be insisted that, in that verse, there is a relation of time between the sound-

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that

is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

ing of the trumpet and the resurrection of the dead, it may be replied that the word there may as properly be translated "shall have been raised," as the word here "shall have put on;" in which case the fact that the resurrection is accomplished previously to the change of the living would be even more distinctly indicated. ¶ *Then shall be brought to pass.* Or fulfilled. The language of the ancient prophets, though originally uttered in reference to other events, is well adapted to express this marvellous change, and in this spiritual sense shall have its entire accomplishment. See note on Matt. ii. 15. ¶ *The saying that is written.* The passage quoted, with some variation, is Isa. xxv. 8. ¶ *Death is swallowed up in victory.* Equivalent to "the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed," ver. 26. Death is here to be taken in its ordinary sense, as denoting the dissolution of living bodies. Spiritual, incorruptible, immortal bodies are beyond the power of death; and when all become such, agreeably to the context, there can be no more death; it is destroyed, swallowed up in victory; or, as the same idea is elsewhere expressed, mortality is swallowed up of life. 2 Cor. v. 4. Although there be no direct reference here to that even more severe death which is "the wages of sin," Rom. vi. 23, that also must be understood as having been abolished, because its continued existence is incompatible with the destruction of "the last enemy." Nothing inimical to the universal and beneficent dominion of God, or to the highest spiritual happiness of its subjects, can then remain. "We cannot finally deny that these words appear, as in ver. 26, to favor the restoration. It evidently not only implies that death has forever lost its power over some (the faithful), though retaining over others its might, as the second death, but that it ceases everywhere, which

can happen only when life has received all into itself, and God is all in all." — *Olshausen.* "The Hebrew word here may be rendered either *unto the end*, that is, to completeness, or perfection, or *unto victory*, with triumph. It matters little which is the meaning, for they both come to the same thing. The idea is, that the power and dominion of death shall be entirely destroyed, or brought to an end." — *Barnes.* The dead being raised incorruptible, and the living changed from corruptible to incorruptible, death hath no more dominion forever.

55. *O death, where is thy sting? &c.* This triumphant exclamation indicates the rapture which filled the apostle's soul, as he contemplated this glorious consummation of the reign of grace. See Rom. xi. 33-36. The language of this verse is similar to that in Hos. xiii. 14, which, though originally applied to a deliverance of the Jews from temporal calamities, is well adapted to the greater deliverance here announced by the apostle. By a bold figure of speech, he personifies and apostrophises both death and the grave, as enemies defeated, conquered, and abolished. The word here rendered *grave* is *ᾠδῆς*, elsewhere translated *hell* in the New Testament. See note on Matt. xi. 23. Whether it be understood to mean literally the grave, or the unseen world which, before life and immortality were brought to life through the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10, was contemplated with doubt, uncertainty, and oftentimes with dread, its power henceforth is broken; it no longer retains any victims in captivity; all are become incorruptible, and immortal, and have entered upon the inheritance of endless life.

56. *The sting of death is sin.* Most commentators understand this as an affirmation that natural death is the penalty of sin. This interpretation is inadmissible, for reasons which are

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

assigned in the note at the end of Rom. ch. vi. "It is difficult to determine whether death is here represented as a monster armed with a *sting* (as the scorpions of Rev. ix. 10), or as a person bearing a *goad* to annoy the world (as in Acts ix. 5). The latter is rendered rather the more probable by the next verse. In either case, sin is the weapon with which death is supposed to inflict his deadly wound, and the law to be the element which gives poison to the sting, or force to the blow, according as it is interpreted."—*Stanley*. "The only thing that makes death—able to do us any hurt (without which it differs nothing from a calm sleep) is sin."—*Hammond*. "Under the law, indeed, enforcing sinless obedience, death was a fearful event."—*Gilpin*. Both observation and the revealed word teach us, that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," Rom. iii. 23; and that God "will render to every man according to his deeds." Rom. ii. 6. From this state of sinfulness, men have vainly endeavored to deliver themselves. The heathen, guided by the light of nature, and the Jew to whom "were committed the oracles of God," Rom. iii. 2, were equally unsuccessful in the attempt. Both were subject to a law requiring constant obedience, under penalty, but giving no assurance of deliverance from bondage or the attainment of the required perfection. See note on Rom. iii. 20. Until, therefore, Christ revealed the "righteousness of God," namely, God's method of making men righteous by the influence of his own grace, they had no well-grounded assurance of deliverance. And, believing, as they generally did, in some sort of life beyond the grave, they naturally shrunk from death, as an entrance upon an untried state, which, for aught they could know to the contrary, might prove more painful than the present. In this manner, a consciousness of sinfulness gave a sting to death, and made it more fearful.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whether or not this be the specific meaning of the metaphor, the main important truth embraced in the text and context is that which concerns us most, and is perfectly obvious; namely, that in whatever sense sin is the sting of death, it ceases to be such when this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal puts on immortality. Death and its sting are then destroyed, swallowed up in victory. If the apostle believed that the sting of death will remain, rankling in the souls of men and poisoning the fountain of their happiness, after death itself, the *last* enemy, shall be destroyed, his triumphant shout of victory in ver. 57, as well as his exultant exclamation in ver. 55, is utterly inexplicable. ¶ *And the strength of sin is the law*. "Why is this law called 'the strength of sin?' Because the law of duty, being acknowledged, gives to sin its power to wound the conscience; in fact, a moral law of precepts and penalties announces the fatal consequences of sin, without giving us any power of conquering sin."—*Conybeare*. If there were no law, there could be no sin; for "sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John iii. 4. See notes on Rom. v. 13; viii. 7-13.

57. *But thanks be to God*. A similar ascription occurs in Rom. vii. 25, on account of the same triumph of divine grace over sin and all obstacles to universal holiness and happiness. *Which giveth us the victory*. "Over sin, death, and the law."—*Burkitt*. "With the thought that death, and with death the two enemies, sin and the law, with which he himself had so long struggled, were now overcome, he breaks forth into an abrupt thanksgiving in which the argument is, as it were, dissolved. Compare the close of the argument in Rom. vii. 25."—*Stanley*. The extent of the *victory* is limited by *Barnes*; but he well describes its nature: "The victory over sin, death, and the grave. God alone is the author of this victory. He formed the plan; he executed it, in the gift

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

of his Son; and he gives it to us personally when we come to die." *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The victory over sin and death is granted to us by God, the ultimate source of all grace, through his Son, our Lord. He sent his Son to save mankind from sin, Matt. i. 21; John iii. 17; Acts iii. 25, 26; Rom. v. 20, 21; Heb. ii. 9; 1 John iv. 14. This was his peculiar mission. And that he is to complete his work, by being the sample and the medium of our translation from mortality to immortality, from the natural body to the spiritual body, is the theme of this chapter, and particularly asserted in ver. 22, 23. The crowning blessing, as well as the blessings introductory to it, is bestowed through the great Captain of our salvation, who bringeth many sons unto glory, having through divine grace tasted death for every man. Heb. ii. 9, 10.

58. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, &c.* This closing exhortation is generally and properly understood to have special reference to the subject of the preceding discussion, "forming, as it were, a practical corollary on the foregoing profound ratiocination on the resurrection of the dead, enjoining three duties: (1) of firmness in faith; (2) immovableness in hope; (3) proficiency in holiness and good works of every kind. They were very properly exhorted to that firmness in the faith, demanded by the authority on which the above revelations were made; that hope, full of immortality, which must result from a firm faith; and lastly, that zealous performance of all good works, which would put to the test the firmness of their faith, and furnish the fairest fruit of its efficacy."—*Bloomfield.* Compare Tit. ii. 11-14. The "work of the Lord" may be understood as specific rather than general, as "the

CHAPTER XVI.

NOW concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

work of preaching the gospel" (*Ols-hausen*), or proclaiming the resurrection of the dead to immortality and incorruption, which is its crowning glory. ¶ *Your labor is not in vain in the Lord.* Or, your labor in the Lord, that is, in the work of the Lord, is not in vain. God will give success to your labor, and make it productive of good fruits. He will "fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 13. The testimony of a good conscience shall accompany faithfulness, in proclaiming and defending the gospel, or in any other work of the Lord; for "whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Jas. i. 25. For further remarks on the resurrection, see note at the end of ch. xvi.

CHAPTER XVI.

Having completed the doctrinal portion of his epistle, the apostle, according to his usual custom, introduces some miscellaneous matters at the close: the collection for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem, ver. 1-4; his contemplated visit to Corinth, ver. 5-9; the probable visit of Timothy, ver. 10, 11; the delay of a visit by Apollos, ver. 12; an exhortation to faithfulness, ver. 13, 14, and to treat "the house of Stephanas" with respect, ver. 15, 16; an expression of his own joy at the arrival of Stephanas and his companions at Ephesus, ver. 17, 18; and general salutations to the church at Corinth, ver. 19-24.

1. *Now concerning the collection for the saints.* Namely, for "the poor saints which are at Jerusalem," Rom. xv. 26. This collection of alms is mentioned in Acts xxiv. 17; Rom. xv. 25, 26;

2 Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

and it is urged at much length in 2 Cor. ch. viii., ix. ¶ *As I have given order, &c.* From what follows, ver. 2, it is manifest that the *order* had reference only to the *manner* in which the collection should be made. Paul did not *demand* it, as by the proper exercise of apostolic power. He boasted of the brethren in Macedonia, that "beyond their power they were willing of themselves," 2 Cor. viii. 3; and he exhorted the Corinthians to give with like willingness: "Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver," 2 Cor. ix. 7. His *order* to the brethren in Galatia was equivalent to his *advice* to the brethren in Corinth, 2 Cor. viii. 10, concerning the manner and time in which the collection should be made. ¶ *Galatia.* A province of Asia Minor. See note on Acts xvi. 6.

2. Upon the first *day* of the week. Literally, "on one of the Sabbaths;" which "is a conventional phrase for the first day of the week. Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 2; Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1; Acts xxi. 7. It is a literal translation of the Hebrew phrase, 'one of the Sabbath, two of the Sabbath,' &c., that is, one after the Sabbath, two after the Sabbath, &c. See Lightfoot on Matt. xxviii. 1."—*Stanley.* Or if, as some say, the Jews sometimes used the word Sabbath to denote the week, the result is the same; the Sabbath proper being the seventh day of the week, the succeeding day would be both "one after the Sabbath," and the first day of the next Sabbath. And this was the day, being the day of our Lord's resurrection, which was thus early consecrated to religious exercises, and designated here by the apostle as an appropriate season for the manifestation of sympathy with the distressed. ¶ *Let every one of you.* He desired that all should avail themselves of the privilege.

3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

The rich might contribute of his abundance; and the pittance of the poor would be equally acceptable and precious in the sight of God; for "it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." 2 Cor. viii. 12. ¶ *Lay by him in store.* Or, let him treasure up, set apart, for this special purpose. The phraseology implies that each should retain in his own custody the amount thus devoted to a charitable use, until it should be brought together at the arrival of the apostle. ¶ *As God hath prospered him.* According to his ability, or, as we should say, in proportion to the amount of his income. There may be an allusion to the Jewish custom of devoting a fixed proportion of their harvests and of the increase of their flocks and herds to sacred uses. The idea is, that he who had gained much should "lay by him in store" a proportionate amount for the benefit of the poor; while he who had gained little, should of that little reserve a pittance. ¶ *That there be no gatherings when I come.* That there be no necessity for each one then to obtain the amount proper to be contributed, but that it should be already "laid by him in store," so that it might be brought together without inconvenience or delay.

3. Whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters. The word *your* is supplied by the translators. Some commentators approve this construction, and suppose the apostle to mean that he would send to Jerusalem such persons as the Corinthians might recommend by their letters to him. The larger number and the more judicious prefer to omit the word, and understand the meaning to be substantially as expressed by *Conybeare*: "Whomsoever you shall judge to be fitted for the trust, I will furnish with letters, and send them to carry your benevolence to Jerusalem." The important idea,

4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Ma-

cedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.

6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you,

however, is that Paul did not propose to take the exclusive charge of the contribution, but to have it placed in the hands of trustworthy agents selected by the church. He would not expose himself to the least suspicion of misappropriating the funds. He preferred that such agents should take the whole responsibility; at the very least, they should share in it, ver. 4. ¶ *Your liberality.* Or *gift*, as in the margin. The word χάρις ordinarily signifies *grace*; it is here put for the effect of grace or favor, that is, for a generous gift. See notes on 2 Cor. viii. 1, 4.

4. *And if it be meet that I go also.* If it be proper and necessary. If my personal attention to the conveyance of your gift shall appear desirable and important. At a later period, Paul cherished a strong desire to visit Jerusalem for this purpose, even though he apprehended much personal danger. His apprehensions were not unfounded; for, while engaged in this mission of love, he was seized by the Jews and sent as a prisoner to Rome. The great importance of this contribution, the benefits which he hoped might result from it, and his deep interest in its successful collection and transmission, are fully expressed by the apostle in 2 Cor. ch. viii., ix. ¶ *They shall go with me.* In no event will I take the whole responsibility. Some of your own church shall be witnesses of my faithfulness, if I go. I will not give my adversaries among you any opportunity to impeach my personal character. See note on 2 Cor. viii. 19.

5. *Now I will come to you.* From 2 Cor. i. 15-17, it appears that Paul's previous intention was to visit Corinth both on his way to Macedonia and on his return; but he had changed his purpose, and now designed to visit Macedonia first, and Corinth afterwards. "If the Lord permit," ver. 7, may be understood as applying to the

whole plan of the contemplated journey. The apostle perpetually recognized the superintending providence of God, and acknowledged his entire subjection to the divine will. See note on Rom. i. 10. ¶ *When I shall pass through Macedonia.* Rather, when I shall have passed through Macedonia. The common version is liable to be misunderstood, as if Corinth were situated in Macedonia instead of Achaia. See note on Acts xvi. 9. ¶ *For I do pass through Macedonia.* The present tense here has the force of the future, equivalent to *I shall pass*, or *I design to pass*, through Macedonia. Paul was not now passing through that province, but was at or near Ephesus, on the opposite side of the Ægean Sea, ver. 8. Instead of crossing the sea to Corinth, as he had originally designed, and thence travelling to Macedonia and returning again to Corinth, he had now determined to cross over to Macedonia first, and subsequently to visit Corinth.

6. *And it may be that I will abide, &c.* He intimates that he will remain with them through the winter, while navigation is dangerous; thus devoting to them more time, perhaps, than would have been embraced in the two visits as originally contemplated. In this intention he was not disappointed; for it appears that he did go to Macedonia, "and when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months." Acts xx. 2, 3; and as he left Corinth only in season to reach Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost, Acts xx. 16, these were probably the winter months. ¶ *That ye may bring me on my journey.* That ye may accompany me on my way, or aid me, according to the custom of the churches. See notes on Acts x. 23; Rom. xv. 24. ¶ *Whithersoever I go.* Whether to Jerusalem, if that shall be adjudged proper, ver. 4, or elsewhere. Whithersoever duty shall call

that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

me, I shall hope for Christian courtesy and attention at your hands.

7. *For I will not see you now by the way.* "For I do not wish to see you now for a passing visit."—*Conybeare*. The principal reason which induced him to change his original purpose, and now to omit the first of his two contemplated visits, is explained in 2 Cor. i. 23. He desired to give them opportunity first to reform the abuses which he rebuked in this epistle, so that he should not have occasion to use severity. ¶ *But I trust to tarry a while with you.* That is, after passing through Macedonia, ver. 5, 6. ¶ *If the Lord permit.* See note on ver. 5.

8. *But I will tarry at Ephesus.* From this, it would seem that this epistle was written at Ephesus. The subscription, indeed, represents it to have been written at Philippi, a city in Macedonia; but this was added by a later hand, and is of no authority. Ephesus was a city in Asia Minor, on the easterly side of the Ægean Sea. See note on Acts xviii. 19. ¶ *Until Pentecost.* A Jewish feast, occurring fifty days after the Passover. See note on Acts ii. 1. Not only was the period of this feast well known to the Jews, of whom there were manifestly a considerable number in the Corinthian church, and therefore very properly referred to, as denoting the season of the year, but it was a feast peculiarly interesting to all Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, as upon its anniversary, not many years previously, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles. It may well be supposed, therefore, that the apostle's language was easily understood by all his brethren. It should be observed, however, that the Pentecost here mentioned was not the same which the apostle desired to keep at Jerusalem, Acts xx. 16; but probably the next preceding.

8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries.

10 Now if Timotheus come,

9. *For a great door and effectual, &c.* "The door of a house being the passage into it, the opening of a door, in the eastern phrase, signified the affording a person an opportunity of doing a thing. The phrase occurs in other passages of Scripture. See Col. iv. 3; Hos. ii. 15. The apostle's long abode at Ephesus was owing to his great success in converting the Ephesians and such strangers as had occasion to resort to that metropolis. But about the time this letter was written, his success was greater than common; for many who used curious arts, the arts of magic and divination, were converted, and burned their books containing the secrets of these arts. Acts xix. 17-20." — *Macknight*. ¶ *And there are many adversaries.* Wherever Paul preached the gospel successfully, opposition was excited, primarily by the Jews, who were scattered throughout the whole region traversed by him, and frequently aided by the Gentiles. It was so at Ephesus. Of the Jews, "divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude." Acts xix. 9. The Gentiles were thus excited, and the opposition of the adversaries finally culminated, perhaps after this epistle was written, in the "uproar" recorded in Acts xix. 23-41. It is observable that the presence of adversaries is named as one inducement to remain in Ephesus. So long as it was practicable, the apostle regarded it as a duty to remain with believers, under such circumstances, that he might sustain and defend them against their adversaries. When the persecution became unendurable, then indeed he departed, in accordance with the direction in Matt. x. 23.

10. *Now if Timotheus come.* Before Paul departed from Ephesus to Macedonia and Achaia, and before the date of this epistle, he sent forth Timo-

see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also *do*.

11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may

thy and Erastus, Acts xix. 21, 22; but it would seem that there existed some doubt whether either of them would reach Corinth. The special duty assigned to Timothy was to remind the Corinthians of the apostle's teaching and example, which he had heard they were neglecting, ch. iv. 17. ¶ *See that he may be with you without fear.* Let him be received with courtesy and kindness. Let him have cause to feel assured that he is among friends. Timothy was then quite young, to be engaged in such an important and responsible undertaking. 1 Tim. iv. 12. If he should be assailed by false teachers in the church, or opposed by its disorderly members, or persecuted by the common enemy, the encouragement and assistance of the faithful are invoked on his behalf. ¶ *For he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.* This is a noble testimonial to his faithfulness. In this respect the apostle declares him to be his own peer. There are many indications in the Acts of the Apostles, and in Paul's epistles, that Timothy was his favorite disciple, affectionately beloved and unreservedly trusted. And in this place, the most unlimited confidence is expressed in his integrity and purity of life.

11. *Let no man therefore despise him.* "It is probable that some of the more wealthy and proud, some who valued themselves or their wisdom and experience, would be disposed to look upon him with contempt. On another occasion, he directed Timothy so to live as that no one should have occasion to despise him on account of his youth, 1 Tim. iv. 12; and he here urges on the Corinthians, that they should not despise him because he was a young man and comparatively inexperienced." — *Barnes*. Notwithstanding his youth, he had enjoyed extraordinary advantages. From a child he had known the holy Scriptures, 2 Tim.

come forth unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

12 As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all

iii. 15, and in his more mature years he had been nurtured by the apostles, both by doctrine and by example. He had wisely improved his advantages, and secured the hearty approbation expressed in ver. 10. Instead of despising him, therefore, the wisest of the Corinthians might profitably listen to his instructions and exhortations. ¶ *But conduct him forth in peace.* When he has accomplished the work committed to him, let him depart in peace, conscious of your respect and Christian affection. Let not his heart be grieved with the recollection of any unkindness or discourtesy on your part. Accompany and cheer him on his journey, as is customary, ver. 6; and let him bear away the cheering consciousness that you duly appreciate his character and his services. ¶ *For I look for him with the brethren.* "Namely, Erastus, who had been sent with Timothy to Corinth, Acts xix. 22, and Titus, who carried this letter, and another brother whose name is not mentioned, 2 Cor. xii. 17, 18; perhaps also, some of the Corinthian brethren, whom the apostle had desired Titus to bring with him to Ephesus, having need of their assistance there." — *Macknight*. Titus was sent to Corinth, indeed; but it is not certain that he carried this letter.

12. *As touching our brother Apollos.* See note on ch. i. 12. ¶ *I greatly desired him to come, &c.* Hence it appears to have been Paul's desire to place Apollos at the head of the brethren who conveyed this letter to Corinth. He had previously preached in that city, had many acquaintances and friends there, and, in many respects, was well qualified for the mission. ¶ *But his will was not at all to come at this time.* It is generally supposed that the unwillingness of Apollos arose from the fact that a party in the church had assumed his name, ch. iii.

to come at this time ; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

4, and that he apprehended the "contention" might be increased rather than diminished by his presence. Paul could write with apostolic authority; yet even he doubted what might be the result of his remonstrances and exhortations, 2 Cor. vii. 5, 6. But Apollos had no such authority, and might well have more serious apprehensions. ¶ *But he will come when he shall have convenient time.* When a fit opportunity should occur. He would visit them at a proper time, when his other engagements would permit, and when his presence would be profitable and edifying.

13. *Watch ye.* In this verse and the next, the apostle gives sundry exhortations which were appropriate to the peculiar dangers which then beset the church. And, first, he would have them vigilant; awake to their perils, that they might not suffer harm through negligence. See note on Matt. xxiv. 42. ¶ *Stand fast in the faith.* Let not your faith be shaken by the arts or by the persecutions of your adversaries. Hold fast the truth, at all hazards. Eph. vi. 13, 14. ¶ *Quit you like men.* Be manly. Behave like men. Be not deceived or terrified, like children; but as full-grown men, relying on divine aid, resist the efforts of false teachers to corrupt your faith, and of open enemies to compel you to renounce the gospel. ¶ *Be strong.* "Steadfast, immovable," ch. xv. 58. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Eph. vi. 10. Let nothing cause you to waver, or tremble. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. See Acts xx. 24; xxi. 13.

14. *Let all your things be done with charity.* Let a spirit of love guide and control all your actions. This is the principal grace. Without it, all spir-

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one

itual gifts and all faith and endurance are of little avail. With it, the service of the humblest disciple is accepted, ch. xiii. While he would have his brethren resolute and firm for the right and watchful against deception and danger, the apostle admonishes them to cherish always a loving spirit.

15. *I beseech you, brethren.* That is, to do what is requested in ver. 16: the remainder of this verse being a parenthesis, exhibiting the reason on which the exhortation is founded. ¶ *Ye know the house of Stephanas.* His household, his family. See note on ch. i. 16. ¶ *That it is the first-fruits of Achaia.* Among the first or principal converts in Achaia. Acts xviii. 12. Stephanas and his household were among the very few converts whom Paul had personally baptized, ch. i. 14-16. In Rom. xvi. 5, Epenetus is styled "the first-fruits of Achaia." The appellation is given generally to those who were among the very first to embrace the gospel or most prominent of the disciples. ¶ *And that they have addicted themselves.* Or devoted themselves. ¶ *To the ministry of the saints.* That is, to the aid and assistance of Christians; entertaining them on their journeys, providing for their wants, and rendering such offices of kindness as the need of each might require.

16. *That ye submit yourselves to such.* The word here used indicates subordination, obedience to authority. The idea probably is, that such were to be treated with becoming deference and respect. It does not appear that they were officers of the church, or otherwise clothed with authority. But all such as manifest extraordinary devotion to the truth, and cheerfully sacrifice time and property for its pro-

that helpeth with us and laboureth.

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

18 For they have refreshed

motion, are entitled to the affectionate regard of their brethren. ¶ *And to every one that helpeth, &c.* The rule was general, and embraced with Stephanas all others of similar character.

17. *I am glad of the coming of Stephanas.* Probably the same person who is mentioned in ver. 15. The special reason why this visit was gratifying to the apostle is stated in what follows. ¶ *And Fortunatus and Achaicus.* These persons are not elsewhere named in the New Testament, and their history is unknown to us. It may be reasonably conjectured that they, with their associate Stephanas, were prominent and trustworthy members of the church at Corinth, who had been selected as fit agents to convey the letter of the church to Paul, ch. vii. 1. ¶ *For that which was lacking on your part, &c.* What this deficiency was, is intimated in ver. 18. Some have supposed Paul to mean that these disciples had furnished a supply for his temporal wants, which the church had neglected to do. But this interpretation is inconsistent with his constant boast that he had never allowed himself to be burdensome to them, but had made the gospel without charge, ch. ix. 15, 16; 2 Cor xi. 9, 10. "Paul describes their presence as supplying the deficiency occasioned by the absence of the Corinthians." — *Olshausen.* "They filled up your deficiency with respect to me, and gave me by their converse and friendly offices that consolation which I might justly have expected from you all, had I enjoyed an opportunity of conversing with you." — *Doddridge.* Perhaps he intended to intimate that, by neglecting to visit him, the church had manifested a lack of solicitude concerning his welfare.

18. *For they have refreshed my*

my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

spirit. By their presence and the exhibition of their Christian affection; by the information which they have imparted concerning the success of the gospel; by their assurance that many remain faithful in your church, and devoted to the gospel in its purity, notwithstanding the errors and corruptions which some have introduced, and which I am called upon to rebuke. ¶ *And yours.* "They refreshed my spirit greatly by their obliging behavior and edifying conversation; as I doubt not but they have often refreshed yours by their ministrations among you." — *Doddridge.* "They refreshed, reinvigorated my spirit, and by a necessary consequence of our sympathy, yours also. It is a concise expression of the same consciousness of identity of feelings and interests, which expresses itself so strongly in 2 Cor. i. 3-7." — *Stanley.* Or we may understand the meaning thus: — their visit has refreshed my spirit by an assurance of your good-will and sympathy; it will have the like effect on you, when my affectionate regard and solicitude for you shall be made known; it is thus refreshing and comforting both to me and to you. ¶ *Therefore acknowledge, &c.* Receive them affectionately and kindly; treat them with proper deference and respect. Rely with confidence on this assurance of my love, and give full credit to any message which they may bear from me.

19. *The churches of Asia.* Although this expression is very general in its form, it probably here denotes only that part of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital city; the churches, namely, which were in frequent communication with Paul at the date of this epistle. See notes on Acts ii. 9; xvi. 6. ¶ *Salute you.* Or, *greet you,* as in ver. 20, where the same

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with a holy kiss.

word is used; express their affectionate regard for you. ¶ *Aquila and Priscilla.* See note on Rom. xvi. 3. ¶ *Salute you much in the Lord.* Send special salutations to you as fellow-Christians. It was natural that these disciples should manifest a particular interest in the church at Corinth, and an exceeding warmth of affection for its members, inasmuch as they had formerly dwelt in that city, and witnessed the introduction and first effects of the gospel there. Acts xviii. 1-3. ¶ *With the church that is in their house.* See note on Rom. xvi. 5.

20. *All the brethren greet you.* "Who is here meant was clear to the Corinthians, but obscure to us. It may be, either the Christians of Ephesus; or the brethren spoken of in ver. 11, 12; or a general summing up of all the Christians within reach of his communication, as in Rom. xvi. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 12." — *Stanley.* It is supposed by *Macknight* that the reference is exclusively to those who were engaged in spreading the gospel, sometimes called *brethren*; but this interpretation seems unnatural. ¶ *Salute one another with a holy kiss.* See note on Rom. xvi. 16.

21. *The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.* Probably the body of this epistle, like others, was written by an amanuensis, the language being dictated by Paul. See note on Rom. xvi. 22. Yet here, as elsewhere, he added a salutation in his own handwriting, to authenticate the whole epistle. This was not only a manifestation of affectionate regard, but it furnished proof of genuineness, and guarded against fraud and imposture. This was his "token in every epistle." 2 Thess. iii. 17. It is not unlikely, though the fact is not expressly stated, that the three succeeding verses were written with his "own hand."

22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ.* The idea is, if any professing Christian love not the Lord Jesus Christ. The denunciation which

21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

22 If any man love not the

follows is not directed nor is it applicable to mankind at large, as will be seen when its character is examined. Paul is not accustomed to speak with so much severity of the heathen, and of those who neither know nor love the Lord. It is very generally agreed that he here speaks of those who, at least in form, professed discipleship. "If any one, professing the gospel, love not the Lord Jesus Christ." — *Macknight.* "If there be any man amongst you, or elsewhere, who, under the specious forms of Christianity, loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, but maintains a secret alienation of heart from him while he calls himself his servant, preferring any interest of his own to that of his divine master." — *Doddridge.* Such are the persons of whom the apostle here speaks.

¶ *Let him be Anathema.* Or, let him be accursed, as in Gal. i. 8, 9, where the same word is used. ¶ *Maranatha.* The Lord has come, or the Lord will come. The word is Syriac, written in Greek characters. The whole sentence is understood by many commentators as a denunciation of endless misery. Let such a one fall under the eternal curse of God; let endless perdition be his fate. This interpretation does not well accord with the spirit uniformly manifested by the apostle, who was willing to endure labor, and privation, and persecution, and even death, for the benefit of mankind. It would be truly surprising to find such a man invoking such a curse upon those for whose benefit he professed a willingness to "spend and be spent." 2 Cor. xii. 15. But he actually invoked no such curse, as is admitted by many who firmly believe that some men shall endure it. The idea is simply, let such a one be cut off from the church; let him be excommunicated; let him endure precisely what Paul declared himself willing to endure on behalf of his Jewish brethren. See note on Rom. ix. 3, where *Anathema*, which is here untranslated, is rendered *accursed.* He was willing to be sepa-

Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

rated from the church, if he might thus secure the conversion of his brethren; but did any Christian, under the influence of the divine Spirit, ever believe that Paul was *willing*, for any object whatever, to endure the curse of God, and to hate and blaspheme Him to all eternity? The idea is monstrous. The punishment which he denounced was not of this nature. Even if excommunication in the apostle's age involved extraordinary results, there is no evidence that God ever granted authority to the church or to the apostles to doom men to endless misery. If excommunication was indeed equivalent to delivering the offender to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, let it be remembered that it was for this purpose, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," ch. v. 5. Excommunication, in that age, was a terrible punishment; yet it did not place its victims beyond the reach of divine grace. Hence the apostle might fitly denounce it here against the offenders specified, even while professing love for all in the context. "If any man love not Christ so well as to confess him, but renounceth him in time of temptation, as the Gnostics affirm it lawful to do, let him fall under the heaviest censures of the church." — *Hammond*. "If any love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be separated from you. Our Lord is coming." — *Wakefield*. "If any man love not Jesus Christ; that is, if he shall lightly regard his doctrine, or cast impediments in the way of this saving doctrine, for the sake of his own advantage, let him be separated from our society. I have no communion with such a one." — *Rosenmuller*. "Maran-atha means, 'The Lord cometh,' and is used apparently by St. Paul as a kind of motto; compare Phil. iv. 5. Billroth thinks that he wrote it in Hebrew characters, as a part of the autograph by which he authenticated this letter. Buxtorf (Lex. Chald. 827) says it was part of a Jewish cursing formula, from the 'Prophecy of Enoch,' Jude 14; but

this view appears to be without foundation. In fact, it would have been most incongruous to have blended together a Greek word, *Anathema*, with a Hebrew phrase, *Maran-atha*, and to use the compound as a formula of execration. This was not done till (in later ages of the church) the meaning of the terms themselves was lost." — *Conybeare*. See my "Selections," &c.

23. *The grace of our Lord, &c.* See note on Rom. xvi. 20.

24. *My love be with you all in Christ Jesus*. "The usual form of salutation concludes the letter, but as the epistle contains many severe words, Paul hastens to assure all, without exception, of his love, in order to prevent any personal application of his strictures." — *Olshausen*. Rather, I would say, lest any should regard him as personally hostile; for he doubtless intended the guilty parties, whether false teachers or workers of iniquity, should make a personal application to themselves of his rebukes and his admonitions. Sharply, however, as he rebuked them, he desired them to understand that he truly loved them; that he cherished in his heart the grace which is so beautifully described in ch. xiii. And although, in order to purify the church, he directed that the guilty should be excommunicated, and assured them that, unless they should reform, when he visited them he would use like severity of discipline, still he would have them believe that he was not hostile, that he did not desire the injury of any man, but on the contrary desired the highest good of all. And the truth of his profession was verified; for when the excommunicated party, he who had been delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, repented and turned again to the Lord, Paul received him with gladness of heart, pronounced his punishment sufficient, and besought his brethren to restore the penitent brother to his former place in the church and in their affections. 2 Cor. ii. 4-11; vii. 8-12. He exhibited that God-like affection which breathed through the lips of the

24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¶ The first *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from

prophet: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

The subscription to this epistle was added by some other person, and is of no authority. It contains two manifest errors: (1) The epistle was writ-

Philippi by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus.

ten at Ephesus, and not at Philippi, ch. xvi. 8; and (2) Timothy was not one of the bearers of it, for he had left Ephesus before it was written; compare ch. xvi. 10; Acts xix. 22. It is not improbable that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, may have conveyed the epistle to Corinth; but even of this we have no authentic evidence.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER XV.

In the commentary on this chapter, the apostle's language concerning the Resurrection is briefly explained. The importance of the subject, however, demands a somewhat more extended examination. Of course, it is not expected that the following observations will be wholly satisfactory to all minds; yet they may not be utterly unprofitable.

If there be any who deny the existence of God, who acknowledge no power superior to that of man, it were useless, in their present condition, to submit arguments to them in proof of the resurrection. They must first be convinced that there is a God, before they can realize his power. But on every man who recognizes a supreme Creator and Ruler of the universe, the question presses, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts xxvi. 8. Does it require more power to restore life to the dead, than to form man, at the beginning, from "the dust of the ground," and to breathe into him the breath of life? No man who believes in God, as the original Creator of the human race, can reasonably doubt his power to raise the dead. No man who accepts the New Testament, as a divine revela-

tion, can doubt that God has promised to raise the dead. But although Christians now almost if not quite unanimously believe in the possibility and the certainty of the Resurrection, many are still perplexed with the questions, *how, when, and into what condition*, the dead shall be raised.

I. Many sincere Christians are perplexed by the question, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" The principal difficulty, now as well as formerly, arises from the supposition that the resurrection involves the reanimation of precisely the same body which dies. It is alleged to be in the highest degree improbable, or even impossible, that the particles of matter, once constituting the natural body, and afterwards decomposed, perhaps burned to ashes and scattered to the four winds, perhaps even having successively entered into the composition of two or more bodies, should be again collected and so arranged that each one should have his own body. To this allegation it may be confidently replied, that the same God who originally arranged the particles of matter in the natural body and endowed them with life, is equally able to rearrange and reanimate them. It does not become us to deny his abil-

ity to repeat what he has once done; nor may we properly doubt that he who numbers the hairs of our heads can easily determine to what individual each particle of decomposed matter properly belongs.

But it is alleged, that matter cannot be converted into spirit; that a natural body cannot become a spiritual body. But are we sure that we fully comprehend the essential distinction between matter and spirit? or that we have absolute knowledge of the primal elements of either? What is the true idea of a spiritual body? Can we conceive of body, without form? or of form, without substance? We know that substances exist of such fine contexture as to be invisible to mortal eyes: the air, for example, is invisible, yet it is distinctly felt when in motion, and its material force uproots the monarchs of the forest, and dashes in pieces the structures erected by human skill. It is not difficult, then, to conceive that spiritual bodies, though invisible, may yet be substantial; at the least, this is not so difficult, as to conceive of bodies without form, or of form without substance. Is it impossible that the particles of matter which constitute natural bodies should be so changed and refined as to be converted into spiritual bodies? Such change would be no more difficult or incomprehensible than other changes which are so common that they excite no surprise. By the ordinary processes of nature, solid bodies become liquid, and liquid bodies become gaseous and invisible; and, on the contrary, gases become liquids, and liquids become solids. For example: a block of solid ice readily melts into water; by the application of more intense heat, the water becomes steam, or gas. By the abstraction of heat, the whole process is reversed, and the gas is converted into water and into ice. In such a process, the particles of matter, though changed so as to become invisible, are not destroyed; their continued existence is demonstrated by their reconversion to their former condition. Yet some, who witness such changes without astonishment, because so common and frequent, cannot conceive the

possibility that the particles of the human body can experience a like change, becoming invisible, yet retaining their existence and identity. Again: inanimate matter becomes animated; and animate matter is converted into different forms, and is endowed with new qualities. Suppose the "bare grain," of which the apostle speaks, instead of being "sown," is eaten by bird, or beast, or fish. As grain, it has only vegetative life; but when digested and converted into nourishment, its particles of matter become portions of a body having animal life, and thus take on a quality which they did not before possess. The same matter undergoes a further change, if the fish, or fowl, or beast, become the food of man. By the same natural process, it is then converted into human bone, and flesh, and blood, and whatever else may pertain to the body; it enters into the composition of all the bodily organs, so that what was formerly destitute of animal life is now endowed with life, and sense, and motion; it helps to form the ear, and becomes an organ of hearing; the eye, and becomes an organ of sight; the tongue, and becomes an organ of taste and of speech; the nerves, and becomes an organ of feeling; the brain, and becomes an organ of thought. Would a further change, into a form and condition answering to any reasonable conception of a spiritual body, be any more difficult or incredible than these which are of daily occurrence? The principal reason, in my judgment, why the one is more easily conceived or credited than the other, is, that the one transformation is constantly in progress within us and around us, while we have never witnessed the other. If we were equally unacquainted with both, both would be equally incredible. I do not affirm, nor indeed do I believe, that the resurrection of the dead involves the reanimation of the entire natural body, and the conversion of all its material particles into a more refined and spiritual form. But if I did so believe, my faith in the resurrection would not be shaken; because analogous changes are facts within my knowledge, and I have no

doubt that the God who can accomplish the one is equally able to accomplish the other.

But why has the reanimation of all the particles of the natural body been considered essential to even a bodily resurrection? It has been said, if the same particles of matter be not reanimated, the identity of the body is destroyed; and without such identity, there can be no proper resurrection of the body, but the spiritual body, if there be one, would be a new creation. Whether this allegation have respect to the particles of matter retained by the body at the moment of death, or to all the particles which have at any time been incorporated with it, the answer is the same; namely, that substantial identity does not consist in the continued union of certain particles of matter, without increase or diminution. Were it otherwise, the identity of the human body would be destroyed daily. In a state of health, the human body does not remain identically the same, in such a strict sense, even for any two successive moments; because its particles of matter are perpetually escaping by insensible perspiration, not to speak of the waste by other processes. It is obvious, on the slightest consideration, that a quantity of matter is daily separated from the body, equivalent to the quantity of nourishment received into it, supposing the general weight of the body to be uniform. As the materials of the bones, or flesh, or any part of the body, become unserviceable, they are thrown off, and fresh materials are deposited in their place. A perpetual process of decay and renovation continues while the body remains in health; and so rapid is this process, that physiologists believe an entire change of materials is accomplished in about seven years. If this be true, no man has in his body any of the materials which composed it seven years ago; and those who attain the allotted age of seventy years, experience ten such total changes. It is certain that no man has in his body precisely the same particles of matter which composed it yesterday; some have been subtracted, and some have probably

been added. But who, for this reason, ever doubted the identity of his own body, or imagined that his former body was destroyed and a new body created? If the substantial identity of the living body may thus be preserved, notwithstanding the constant gradual change, amounting to entire periodical changes, of its particles of matter, surely the reanimation of every particle of the dead body cannot be necessary to the substantial identity of the new body with the old. So that, supposing the resurrection of the dead to involve the proper resurrection of the body, there need not necessarily be a reanimation of the precise number of particles of matter which composed it at the moment of death or at any previous period.

The question returns: "With what body do they come?" Revelation answers, that it is a "spiritual body." The precise nature or character of the spiritual body is not defined; yet there are certain hints in the Scriptures which deserve attention. In this chapter, the apostle intimates, by the illustration in ver. 37, that the spiritual body is not precisely the same as the natural body; but, though in some respects similar, it is in many respects different. The stalk, with its roots, leaves, blossoms, and fruit, is not precisely the "bare grain" which is sowed. The whole contrast between the present and the future body, ver. 42-44, indicates that the living body raised differs very much from the dead body buried. On the other hand, an important relation between the two bodies is plainly and frequently intimated. Thus Paul speaks of the "redemption of the body." Rom. viii. 23. Thus also he declares that "the Lord Jesus Christ — shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. iii. 21. So also the change described in ver. 51-54 apparently denotes a transformation, rather than destruction and a new creation; a transformation, namely, of something belonging to the natural body into a spiritual body. From such intimations it would seem that, between the natural body and the spiritual body, there is a substantial identity, but a

broad characteristic difference; or in somewhat paradoxical language, that they are the same, yet not the same.

Such a transformation, preserving identity yet involving difference, is vividly illustrated, and indeed intimated, by familiar processes of nature. The transformation of the worm into the butterfly is of this character. For its appointed time, the worm exhibits an unsightly and loathsome appearance, and slowly crawls upon the ground or upon the plants on which it feeds. As its period of transformation approaches, it passes into the chrysalis state and becomes wholly inactive, entombed as it were in its shell. Soon afterwards, one of the most beautiful and brilliant of all insects bursts forth from this apparently inanimate structure, and, poising itself on wings, floats upon the air, and revels among the flowers. What relation does the body of the butterfly bear to the body of the worm? It is not precisely the same; for not only is its form more gorgeous, its organization more delicate, and its means of locomotion and even of sustenance entirely different, but the shell of the old body is left behind and returns to the dust. It is manifest that not all the particles of matter composing the body of the worm are incorporated into the body of the butterfly. Yet there is unquestionably an intimate relation between the two bodies; and it cannot be denied that at least some of the particles of matter once constituting the old organization have become a part of the new organization which emerges from it. The two bodies, therefore, are the same, yet not the same; substantially identical, yet characteristically different. It may be truly said, that the worm is transformed into the butterfly; and it may be said, with equal truth, that a large portion of the worm does not become a butterfly, but returns to the dust.

Another example is cited by the apostle, to illustrate the change wrought in the resurrection. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain," ver. 37. The blade which springs up and bears fruit is not precisely the seed which is

sown. It contains, at maturity, a much larger quantity of matter than the seed. Moreover, of the seed, diminutive as it is in proportion to the size of the blade, a part is not absorbed into the new organization, but is decomposed and returns to the dust. Yet it cannot be denied that some portion of the seed is thus absorbed. The first rudiment of the blade is found within the body of the seed; and it attains an organized form, and increases in volume, before it emerges from the shell. And after it springs up, by the attachment which it retains to the seed, it continues to absorb some of its particles of matter. While, therefore, there is a difference between the plant and the seed, each containing particles of matter not belonging to the other, it is also true that a substantial identity is preserved; or, at the least, that the one is founded upon and results from the other. This truth is demonstrated by the fact, that to each seed is given its "own body." The peculiar character of the seed is impressed on the blade; else tares might grow from wheat, or the plant springing from the acorn might as well be a pine as an oak. The inseparable connection, the substantial identity indeed, between the seed and the plant is undeniable, notwithstanding the particles of matter entering into the composition of both is very minute in comparison with the whole mass.

That a relation exists between the "spiritual body" and the "natural body," in some degree analogous to that which exists between the butterfly and the worm, and between the blade and the seed, is not intrinsically improbable; on the contrary, it has its type in the ordinary processes of nature; and it is as easy to conceive that some portion of the materials now composing the "natural body" shall be transformed into a "spiritual body," as that a portion of the worm becomes a perfect butterfly, or that a portion of the seed becomes a perfectly organized plant, which operations of nature are facts within our knowledge. Moreover, such a relation is apparently intimated by the apostle, when he compares the resurrection with the ger-

mination and growth of plants from the seed, or illustrates the one by the other. Precisely what that relation is, we know not. Yet there are some indications of its nature. In the New Testament, the "spiritual body" is uniformly represented as a reality, — an organization enveloping the spirit; and such a representation implies form and substance; for, as it has already been observed, we cannot conceive of an actual body without form, or of form without substance. Whence the substance of the spiritual body is derived, is not specifically revealed; but what derivation is so easily conceived, or so intrinsically probable, as that which is involved in the transformation of a portion of the natural body. If it be objected that matter is not susceptible of such transformation, the proper answer is, that the objection assumes more than any man knows. We know not all the properties or capabilities of matter. We do know it is capable of marvellous changes; for they are of familiar occurrence. What is the limit of those changes, we know not. We know it may be converted from a solid to a liquid form, and thence to a gaseous form, in which it becomes invisible. We know it may be converted from an inanimate to an animated and organized form, in which it takes on the qualities of sense and motion. For aught which we know to the contrary, it may be still further transformed, and the finer particles of the natural body may be taken into a new form and may become a spiritual body. If it be further objected, that we cannot perceive the departure of anything except life from the natural body, when it dies, the answer is, that, by the conditions of the case, such departure must be imperceptible; because the spiritual body, however composed, is invisible to mortal sight. Moreover, we know that matter parts with some of its properties, and for aught which we can know to the contrary with some of its minute particles, without appreciable change of form or mass; as, for example, when the electric fluid is discharged. This "subtle, imponderable and highly elastic fluid, pervading all material bodies,

and capable of moving with various degrees of facility through the pores or actual substance of different kinds of matter," is sometimes accumulated and sometimes dispersed. When two bodies approach, which are differently charged, this fluid passes from the one to the other, until an equilibrium is produced. Its passage is sometimes visible, as in the electric spark or in the flash of the lightning; in less quantity it is invisible, yet the fact of its passage is demonstrated by the shock which the human body feels when subjected to the experiment. But by no test hitherto applied, can any change be detected in the form or mass of the body from which the electric fluid has departed; yet no one doubts the fact of its departure. In like manner, the apparently unchanged condition of the natural body, when life has departed, does not forbid or discredit the supposition that some of the finer particles of its substance have also departed, and have been transformed into a living spiritual body. If there be actually such a transformation, then a substantial identity is preserved between the new body and the old, however great may be their characteristic difference, and notwithstanding the grosser particles of the natural body return to the dust, or enter into new combinations, agreeably to the laws of nature. That such a relation is thus preserved, I cannot demonstrate, nor maintain by absolute scriptural proof; but, in my judgment, the contrary is equally incapable of demonstration or absolute proof. In the absence of a more decisive guide, and led by what I regard as the evident intimations both of nature and of revelation, I believe the spiritual body has an intimate relation or substantial identity with the natural body, in the manner already indicated.

* II. Not only have Christians been perplexed in regard to the *manner* of the resurrection, but they have entertained widely diverse opinions as to the *time* of its occurrence. These opinions may be reduced to three

* A part of what follows I have heretofore published in the "Universalist Quarterly."

classes: (1) That all men shall be raised from the dead simultaneously at the end of the world. (2) That Jesus Christ was literally the first in the order of time, who rose from the dead; that when he assumed his kingdom, coming in power, all who had previously died were raised; and that thenceforth the resurrection became progressive. (3) That the resurrection has kept even pace with death from the beginning; and that it will continue to do so until death shall be finally "swallowed up in victory." In proof of each opinion, an appeal is made to the Scriptures, by which alone, as all agree, the question must be decided. That different passages of the Scriptures, when taken separately, seem to furnish proof of each theory, is undeniable; but it is not to be supposed that there is any actual and absolute contradiction between the several testimonies. The proper question is, how can these *apparently* conflicting testimonies be effectually harmonized? or, if we cannot perceive their perfect harmony, which theory of the resurrection is capable of the most satisfactory proof, and attended with the fewest and the slightest difficulties? In discussing this question, I shall examine only those Scriptures which, by common consent, are admitted to refer to a literal resurrection to immortality, excluding all such as are of disputed signification.

1. Shall all men be raised from the dead simultaneously, at the end of the world? A simultaneous, universal resurrection is supposed to be taught in ver. 51-54; 1 Thess. iv. 13-17; and to be indicated in John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54; xi. 23, 24, and some other places of similar character. The obvious objection to this theory is, that other Scriptures indicate that the resurrection had commenced and was in progress in the days of Christ and his apostles. Such, for example, was our Lord's reply to the Sadducees, Mat. xxii. 23-32; Mark xii. 18-27; Luke xx. 27-38. According to the common version of Mark's record, he said, "As touching the dead that *they rise*," or rather, "*are raised*," as the same word, used by Luke, is more properly translated.

The natural meaning of this language is, that the dead are already raised, not that they shall be raised at some far distant period. Moreover, the proof cited from Moses confirms the idea suggested by such phraseology: "Now that the dead *are raised*, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him." Luke xx 37, 38. The language used by the other Evangelists is substantially the same. The argument is this: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; but Moses calls him the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; therefore they are living, though once dead. And what is said of these three individuals is asserted as a general truth in the closing words: "for all live unto him;" and, if living, they had already been raised from the dead; for the resurrection was the specific fact which our Lord proposed to prove by showing that those who had once died were again alive. Moreover the same is true concerning Moses and Elias, or Elijah, who appeared on the "high mountain," and conversed with our Lord, when he was transfigured. Matt. xvii. 1-9; Mark ix. 2-10; Luke ix. 28-36; 2 Pet. i. 16-18. According to the flesh, Moses and Elias had been dead for centuries; yet they appeared and conversed as living spirits. Because Matthew says our Lord charged his disciples that they should "tell the *vision* to no man," some have supposed the whole scene was represented to them in a dream or trance. But the word *vision* should not here be understood in this confined sense; for Mark, in recording the same transaction, says, "he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had *seen*." So Peter, who was one of the witnesses, expresses confidence in the reality of the appearance: "We were eye-witnesses of his majesty—when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were

with him in the holy mount." Could he doubt that the living appearance of Moses and Elias was as actual as that of Christ himself? and as actual as the "voice which came from heaven"? He saw the one as distinctly as he heard the other. Their appearance indicated that Moses and Elias were then living; and, if living, that they had already been raised from the dead, if the foregoing argument be well founded. And what was true in regard to them and to the three ancient patriarchs, our Lord declared to be equally true in regard to all who had died; "for," said he, "all live unto him," that is, unto God.

Among the Scriptures which seem to teach that the resurrection had already commenced and was in progress, is 2 Cor. v. 1-8; where Paul indicates his expectation that the present life shall be succeeded by the future life, "our earthly house of this tabernacle" by the "building of God," without a long interval. In accordance with such an expectation, he says, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: For we walk by faith, not by sight: We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." It is difficult to perceive in what sense he expected his absence from the body would involve a more immediate presence with the Lord before he should be raised from the dead; or in what manner he expected to gain that presence the sooner by an early departure from the body, if the resurrection of all men should be postponed until the end of the world. Even more emphatic is his language in Phil. i. 21-24: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Far *better* does not fully express the force of the original, which is one of those compound superlatives employed by Paul to express an idea in the most

intense form. But if he believed he should "be with Christ" just as soon, if he continued still longer to live and labor (which was "needful" for the brethren), as he should if he departed more speedily from the flesh, how could he regard such speedy departure as "far better," and as a "gain"? That he should be "in a strait betwixt two," under the circumstances stated, if he supposed the time of his admission to the immediate presence of Christ depended on the time of his departure from the flesh, seems perfectly natural; but if otherwise, his strait is not easily comprehended.

Many attempts have been made to obviate this and similar objections. The most prominent theory urged for this purpose is, that the spirit consciously exists, and is capable of happiness or misery, during a period which intervenes between death and the resurrection; so that, although the resurrection do not occur until the end of the world, there is yet a state of spiritual existence in the mean time, which may properly be an object of desire, as preferable to the present mortal state. But this theory is liable to the objection, that the Scriptures apparently recognize only two states of existence for men, the present and the future, the mortal and the immortal; and that the only revealed passage from the one to the other is the resurrection. Thus when the Sadducees proposed their question, already mentioned, our Lord described the difference between the present state of things and that which should exist in the resurrection state; but he gave no intimation of a conscious existence intermediate between the two. Such an omission is the more remarkable, since this is his only recorded discourse expressly devoted to this subject. It is to be observed, that the precise point which our Lord proposed to prove was, not a future life independent of a resurrection, nor a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection, but "the resurrection of the dead." Matt. xxii. 31. On the supposition that those who die may enjoy a future life previously to their resurrection, or, which is substantially the

same, without a resurrection, how did the existence of the patriarchs, so many centuries after their death, prove that they had been raised? Indeed, how would it prove that they ever would be raised? If they then lived without having been raised, they might continue to live indefinitely without a resurrection. Unless the resurrection be the process through which those who die are introduced into the future life, it is not easily seen how the possession of such life proves the reality of the resurrection. But this was precisely what our Lord professed to prove by the divine testimony concerning the patriarchs. They live, because God, who is God only of the living, calls himself *their* God. They "are raised," because they live, as they could not without a resurrection. Such, in my judgment, is the scope of the argument. In no different manner am I able to perceive its conclusive force. Moreover, on supposition of an intermediate state of existence, although it is declared that he "put the Sadducees to silence," Matt. xxii. 34, it does not appear that our Lord directly met their question. They denied a future life, and said "that there is no resurrection." Their question was so framed as to involve what they regarded as an insuperable objection to the doctrine which he taught. He replied, that the condition and relations of mankind would be so changed "in the resurrection," that the apprehended difficulty could not exist. But if there were an intermediate existence, enduring for thousands of years, he did not intimate that the difficulty might not exist in full force for an equally long period. The rational interpretation of his language is, that he described the condition of the future life, from its commencement; yet the resurrection is the commencing point of his description. Thus also, in the most particular account of the resurrection contained in the Scriptures, namely, in that given by Paul in this chapter, only two states of existence for men are recognized:—the one closed by death; the other commenced by the resurrection. On one side of the dividing line is the "natural

body," characterized by corruption, and dishonor, and weakness; on the other, the "spiritual body," characterized by incorruption, and glory, and power. The passage from the one to the other is through "the resurrection of the dead," ver. 42-44. The apostle does not intimate, nor am I aware that any one believes, that the spiritual body is bestowed before the resurrection. He says nothing of a long period during which the spirit shall have neither a natural body nor a spiritual body. If he believed there should be such an intermediate disembodied state, was not this emphatically a proper place to mention it? and can his silence be reasonably accounted for? The same questions apply with equal force to his language in 2 Cor. v. 1-8, where he speaks of the "building of God," or the spiritual body, as being in readiness to take the place of "our earthly house of this tabernacle," or the natural body. Moreover, what he so ardently desired was, not to be "unclothed," or to be released from the natural body, but to be "clothed upon," or to be invested with the spiritual body. He expresses his confidence that he shall not be "naked," or disembodied, or destitute of a body. *Robinson* translates and paraphrases thus: "If indeed also (as we may take for granted, *i. e.* since) being (thus) clothed we shall not be found naked." The clothing which he uniformly represents as appropriate to the future life is the spiritual body. I do not recollect that he ever speaks of any other. Yet this, as uniformly, he represents as bestowed in the resurrection. If he expected to exist for an indefinite period between death and the resurrection, having neither a natural body nor a spiritual body, it would seem that he must have expected to remain "naked" during an equal period; for he speaks of no other or intermediate clothing. But, since his language implies an expectation that the natural body will be succeeded by the spiritual body without any interval of nakedness, and since the spiritual body is bestowed only in the resurrection, the natural conclusion is that he did not anticipate an intermediate conscious

existence between death and the resurrection. Of the same general character is the declaration in 1 Cor. xv. 18, that if there be no resurrection of the dead, then not only "is not Christ risen," but "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." This seems necessarily to imply that, if the dead rise not, they can never live again; that the resurrection precedes the future life, or is the introduction to it; that the one cannot be enjoyed until the other shall be experienced. Else how would the fact that there is no resurrection of the dead prove that such have perished, or ceased to exist?

Some have supposed that our Lord's reply to the Sadducees should be understood as a figure of speech, like that to which the apostle refers when he says that God "calleth those things which be not as though they were." Rom. iv. 17. Thus interpreted, it would not prove that the patriarchs were then actually alive from the dead, but would only indicate the certainty that they should be raised. Whatever is certain of accomplishment may be and often is spoken of as already accomplished. See Heb. ii. 8, 9. But it is not probable that our Lord's language, in this place, was so uttered. Its design, and its construction throughout, indicate that the literal is the true interpretation. It is not alleged, I think, that the language concerning Moses and Elias is such a figure of speech. That language is declarative, not prophetic. It cannot be understood as descriptive of what should occur in the far-distant future; but it is manifestly a statement of what had already occurred. The similarity between the two passages is strong presumptive evidence that they should alike be interpreted literally; that as Moses and Elias were actually living when they conversed with our Lord on the mount, so also were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, actually living, when Christ appealed to their existence in proof of the resurrection. If the actual existence of Moses and Elias be admitted (and I see not how it can be denied), there is no apparent necessity for understanding our Lord to speak of the prospective rather than the actual

existence of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

The objections thus far stated against the theory of a simultaneous universal resurrection, at the end of the world, may be thus summed up: Our Lord declared that the patriarchs were in the actual enjoyment of life while he dwelt on the earth; the Evangelists say that Moses and Elias personally conversed with Jesus on the mount, and Peter adds his testimony as an eye-witness; Paul repeatedly expresses his hope and his confidence that the future life shall succeed the present without any long interval, and avows his "desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" than to remain in the flesh. Yet the resurrection is represented as the entrance upon the future life. The life of the patriarchs is alleged by Jesus in proof of the resurrection; and neither he nor his apostles give any intimation that the future life can be attained otherwise than through the resurrection. The theory of an intermediate state does not seem sufficiently supported by the Scriptures, to obviate these objections; but they remain in full force. Another objection is sometimes urged; namely, that if the dead be not raised until the end of the world, and if there be no intermediate state of existence, there is an absolute loss of existence and happiness, between death and the resurrection, inconsistent with the revealed character and designs of God. However much or however little real force there may be in this objection, I do not choose to urge it here, inasmuch as it is not directly founded on the testimony of revelation.

2. Was Christ literally the first, in the order of time, who arose from the dead? Were all who had previously died simultaneously raised, when he assumed his kingdom in glory? And is the resurrection progressive from that time forward? It is not denied that this theory derives apparent support from certain passages of Scripture; yet, after a patient and attentive examination, the objections heretofore urged against a simultaneous universal resurrection, at the end of time, seem to me of equal force against a simul-

taneous general resurrection of the previously dead, when Christ assumed his kingdom. If the language of Jesus concerning the patriarchs, and the record concerning Moses and Elias, prove that they were raised from the dead before the end of the world, they prove, with equal certainty, that these individuals were raised before Jesus died, and arose, and entered into glory. If they prove this, they prove also that Jesus was not the first, in the order of time, who arose from the dead, and that any subsequent resurrection could not include *all* who had previously died. So, when Paul represented the future life as immediately consequent upon the present, it must be remembered that, although Christ had risen from the dead, he had not yet come in his kingdom with glory. If the coming was then future, and if none should be raised previously to his coming, how should Paul expect the sooner to "be with Christ" by a speedy departure, than if he abode longer in the flesh? And how should he feel so confident of being clothed immediately with a heavenly body, upon the destruction of the earthly tabernacle? The interval of time would be less, on this theory than on the other; but an interval of considerable length is recognized; and, in my judgment, it is equally difficult, on either theory, to account for the expectation of Paul, that his admission to the immediate presence of Christ would be realized more speedily by an early death than otherwise. With this view of the case, it seems unnecessary to repeat the objections at length; it is sufficient to refer to them, as exhibited in the foregoing section. The objection, however, founded on Paul's description of the resurrection, may be stated again in a somewhat different form, showing that it bears against this theory with peculiar force. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." How? "So also is the resurrection of the dead.—It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." I have heretofore observed that no intimation is here given of a state in which the spirit shall be absolutely disembodied, having neither a

natural body nor a spiritual body. Now the theory under discussion assumes that all those who died previously to the time when Christ came in his kingdom, remained destitute of spiritual bodies until that time; but that in regard to all who died subsequently, the spiritual body immediately succeeded the natural body. Whether an intermediate state be supposed, or not, a vast difference is discoverable between the two classes. The former either existed consciously, some of them for thousands of years, destitute of either natural or spiritual bodies, or they remained both disembodied and unconscious during that period. The latter pass immediately from the natural to the spiritual body, without unconsciousness or nakedness. But we find no such distinction in Paul's description. He gives no intimation that his language does not apply to the whole process of the resurrection, from the beginning to the end; or that it is not as applicable to those who had previously died, as to those who should die subsequently. Had Paul believed that the resurrection was so long delayed, in regard to the one class, and that it should be granted to the other without delay, we might reasonably expect some hint of such belief, in a description so particular, and specially designed to meet and remove objections.

3. Is the resurrection progressive, keeping even pace with death? In other words, is the natural body of every man immediately, or very soon, succeeded by the spiritual body? and does the same rule apply to the whole race, from the first triumph of death until it shall be finally "swallowed up in victory"? Some of the more obvious arguments in support of this theory have already been stated, in the form of objections to other theories; and they need not be repeated. In like manner, the more obvious arguments in support of the other theories will be here stated, in the form of objections to this theory. They may be comprehended in three classes, which will be successively examined.

(a) It is alleged that the Scriptures represent Jesus Christ as the

first, in the order of time, who arose from the dead; and that consequently the resurrection could not have been progressive during the previous period. But is it certain that priority in time is the true idea embraced in the passages generally quoted in proof? The language of Paul before King Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 23, is thus translated in the common version: "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles." If this translation were undoubtedly correct, the question would seem to be settled. But, to state the case in its mildest form, there are very grave doubts as to its correctness. It is certain that precisely the same words which are here rendered "that should rise from the dead" are translated "by the resurrection from the dead," in Rom. i. 4. The original phrase contains no verb whatever. If rightly translated in Romans, it is wrongly translated here. Adopting the translation of these words in Romans, and omitting the word *and*, supplied by the translators, the passage would stand thus: "That Christ should suffer, that he, the first, by the resurrection from the dead, should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles." There is good reason for believing this translation to be substantially correct. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are here represented to be essential to his qualification to show light to the people and to the Gentiles. There is no perceivable relation between the mere fact, if it were a fact, that he was the first, in the order of time, who arose from the dead, and his qualification or authority as a divine teacher. But his resurrection itself, in a visible form, under the circumstances of the case, was an authentication of his mission and authority, inasmuch as it demonstrated him to be the "Son of God." See note on Rom. i. 4. It was the *fact* and not the relative *time* of his resurrection, which afforded this demonstration of his Sonship, and of his authority to speak in the Father's name. This passage is thus interpreted by the authors of the Assembly's

Annotations: "The first, as head of his church, to give them a spiritual life; 1 Cor. xv. 20; Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5. First, as the author of life, not the first in time; for some were raised from the dead before he died." There is a sense, indeed, in which Christ may be regarded as first, in the order of time, in respect to the resurrection; namely, that he was the first who was *so* raised to immortality as to demonstrate the fact to others; that he was the first whose divine authority as a teacher was *thus* demonstrated. *Rosenmuller* understands the text to embrace this idea, and translates thus: "That he should be the first, who, after resurrection, or, from the time when he arose from the dead, proclaimed the gospel to his own people and to the Gentiles." To the same effect, *Hammond* translates: "That he first, by the resurrection from the dead, should show light," &c. This may be the meaning in this place; that Christ was the first who was thus qualified as a divine instructor, by a visible resurrection. But I prefer the other interpretation, and agree with *Barnes* in the opinion that "it does not mean that he should be the first, in the order of time, that should rise, but first in eminence, the most distinguished, the chief, the head of those who should rise from the dead." To interpret it as denoting that Christ was literally the first, in the order of time, who arose from the dead, is to involve ourselves in inextricable difficulties. If merely the resurrection of the body be understood, such an interpretation is contradicted by the fact that Christ himself *thus* raised more than one person, before his own death and resurrection, to say nothing of the cases recorded in the Old Testament. He could not, therefore, be the first, in this sense. If a resurrection to immortality be understood, we are confronted by the fact that Christ acknowledged the existence of the patriarchs, during his lifetime, and urged the fact that they were then alive as conclusive proof of the resurrection; and he gave no intimation that they needed another resurrection to make them immortal. He could not, therefore, be

the first, in this sense. If it be understood simply that Christ existed before any man was raised from the dead, I readily admit and firmly believe the fact of such existence; but that existence was not derived through a resurrection from the dead, and cannot be regarded as the first-fruits of such resurrection. These remarks are as applicable to the proof-texts which follow, as to that which is under immediate consideration.

A somewhat similar testimony is found in Col. i. 18: "And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." I think this is rightly interpreted by *Barnes*: "The first-born from the dead; having among all the dead who should be raised up, the right and pre-eminence of the primogeniture, or which pertained to the first-born." The manifest object of Paul, in this passage, is to describe the pre-eminent rank and dignity of Jesus Christ. With this, the relative *time* of his resurrection has no perceivable relation; it is the *fact* of his resurrection, which demonstrates his Sonship. Rom. i. 4. The term "first-born," is used in the Old Testament to denote, not only priority of birth, but superior dignity and authority. Thus the Lord says by the Psalmist, "Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." Ps. lxxxix. 27. This is one of the Hebrew parallels, in which the same idea is substantially repeated in different terms. To be the "first-born" is here equivalent to being "higher than the kings of the earth;" both expressions denote superior rank and dignity. The language of the apostle embraces the same idea, though not expressed in a poetic parallel. In the previous verses, the eminence of Christ among the living is asserted; it is here declared that he is equally eminent among those who have departed this life. The whole passage is similar to Rom. xiv. 9: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living;" that is, as here expressed, "that in all things he

might have the pre-eminence." This interpretation is confirmed by comparison with ver. 15, where the word "first-born" occurs in a similar sense: "Who is the image of God, the first-born of every creature." That this does not mean that his literal birth of the virgin Mary preceded the birth of all men, is very certain; and if it refer to his pre-existence, the use of the term "first-born" must be in the highest degree figurative. But, if figurative in regard to the living, why need it be understood literally in regard to the dead? The most natural meaning of the language in both places, when considered in connection with the context, is that our Lord is highly exalted above both the living and the dead; that he has pre-eminence over all. The remarks on this passage are equally applicable to Rev. i. 5, where Christ is styled the "first-begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth." The same Greek word is translated "first-born" in one place, and "first-begotten" in the other; and for "first-begotten of the dead," we have the parallel, "the prince of the kings of the earth," as in Psalm lxxxix. 27.

Another passage supposed to prove that Christ was the first, in the order of time, who rose from the dead, is 1 Cor. xv. 20, in which he is called "the first-fruits of them that slept;" and in ver. 23, it is written concerning the resurrection, "but every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Superiority in rank and dignity seems to be here denoted by "first-fruits," as by "first-born" in other places, rather than priority in time. I have already stated the difficulties involved in a different construction, and need not repeat them. The analogy existing between this and the other passages seems to warrant the conclusion that the essential idea here is, that in this as in all other respects, Jesus Christ has the "pre-eminence." It has been said that the construction of the language, "Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming," necessarily denotes order in time, and cannot de-

note order in rank. To this, it is a sufficient reply, that the same construction in the Greek occurs in 1 Cor. xii. 28, where order in rank, not in time, is unquestionably denoted: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing," &c. "After that" in this place, and "afterward" in the other, are different translations of the same word. Hence it appears that the construction of *first* with *afterward*, or *after that*, is not exclusively appropriate to order in time, but may denote relative rank. It seems to be so used here. Christ "is called the 'first-fruits of them that slept.'" This declaration is therefore made of him by way of eminence, as being chief, a prince among those raised from the dead; — as by his rising, securing a dominion over death and the grave, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26; and as bringing life and immortality to light. He rose to return to death no more. And he thus secured an ascendancy over death and the grave, and was thus, by way of eminence, *first* among those raised from the dead." — *Barnes*. In the same class may be placed the language of Peter on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 22-36. This has been supposed to assert that David had not then been raised from the dead, and to imply that none other had thus been raised. And hence it has been inferred that Christ was literally the first who arose from the dead. But the general scope of the whole passage indicates a different interpretation. It was no part of Peter's design to deny that David had attained a resurrection; it was sufficient to assert that he had not been raised in the specific manner denoted in the prophecy to which he appealed. He was endeavoring to convince the Jews that Jesus was the true Messiah, the Son of God. In proof, he cited from one of their own prophets two predictions, which had been accomplished in Jesus, and in no other person. (1.) That he should be so raised from the dead, that his flesh should not "see corruption," or be decomposed, ver. 27. The argument is, David could not have spoken thus concerning himself,

because he died, was buried, and his flesh decayed and dissolved in the sepulchre, ver. 29; he must therefore have spoken concerning some other person, and that person was Jesus Christ, whose body had been *thus* raised without seeing corruption, of which all the apostles were witnesses, ver. 30-32. (2.) That he should be exalted to a glorious position, at the right hand of God, until his foes became his footstool, ver. 34, 35. The argument is, David could not have spoken this concerning himself, because he is not *thus* exalted; he has not, in this sense, "ascended into the heavens;" ver. 34; he must therefore have spoken concerning some other person, and that person was Jesus Christ, whose ascension the apostles had witnessed, and whose exaltation was demonstrated by the miracles wrought in the presence of the Jews. In the language of Peter, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear," ver. 33. The conclusion of the whole argument is stated in ver. 36: "that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Such being the character of the argument and of the point designed to be proved, the fact that David's body was decomposed in the sepulchre, like the bodies of other men, is not urged in proof that he had not passed into a future life, by a resurrection, but simply in proof that the prediction of a *resurrection without seeing corruption* must have referred to some other person, namely, to Christ. So also, the fact that "David is not ascended into the heavens" is not urged in proof that he had not been raised from the dead, but only in proof that the prediction of *exaltation to the right hand of God* must have referred to some other person, namely, to Christ. The whole passage, therefore, neither affirms nor denies the resurrection of David, in the ordinary manner, but simply proves, according to the apostle's design, that the predictions quoted were accomplished, not in David, but in our Lord Jesus Christ. See the similar argument by Paul in Acts xiii. 32-37.

It is sometimes objected, that Christ could not raise all men from the dead, unless he were raised first of all. Absolutely, it would seem, all men are to be raised by the power of God, even as Jesus himself was raised. 1 Cor. vi. 14. But in this work, as in others, the Son is the Father's agent, for its accomplishment. 2 Cor. iv. 14. If his agency in raising the dead have respect to the whole race, I apprehend the objection is rather apparent than real. It should not be overlooked that Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am;" and that he prayed, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John viii. 58; xvii. 5. If he existed in glory with the Father before Adam was created, he was as competent an agent to raise the dead, when death first entered the world, as after he had assumed a natural body, had suffered death, and had himself been raised from the dead. He is able, through divine power, to raise the dead, not because he has himself been thus raised, but because he is the Son of God. It may be objected that, if Christ were not absolutely the first who was raised from the dead, his spiritual body was fashioned like those of the generations previously raised, instead of their bodies being "fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. iii. 21. It is sufficient to reply that, for aught which appears or can be proved to the contrary, the spiritual body of Christ after his resurrection was the same which he possessed before his incarnation. While there is no evidence to the contrary, there are intimations that it was the same. Thus he prayed that he might be reinstated in his former glory, John xvii. 5; and in ver. 47-49 of this chapter, it is most natural to understand that as the earthy body, whose image we now bear, was of earthy origin, so the heavenly body, whose image we shall bear in the resurrection, was of heavenly origin. If it be true, as is certainly probable, that the spiritual body of Christ has been the same from the beginning, then nothing hinders that the bodies of those who were raised before his incarnation,

as well as of those raised at any subsequent period, were "fashioned like unto his glorious body," the pattern of all.

(b.) Another objection to the theory that the resurrection has been progressing from the beginning is that the future tense is frequently used concerning it, by the sacred writers. "In Christ *shall* all be made alive." "We *shall* also bear the image of the heavenly." "He which raised up the Lord Jesus *shall raise* up us also by Jesus." 1 Cor. xv. 22, 49; 2 Cor. iv. 14. But the present tense, sometimes with the force of the past, is also used in reference to the same subject: "In the resurrection they — *are* as the angels of God." "Now that the dead *are raised*, even Moses showed," &c. Matt. xxii. 30; Luke xx. 37. See also ver. 12, 13, 16, 42-44, 48, of this chapter. But suppose the future tense were uniformly used; the utmost which such use could prove is the unquestioned fact, that the event described is not yet fully accomplished. The resurrection of the dead is generally mentioned as a single event in which all are interested; and as a whole, its full accomplishment was then and is now future. The resurrection of the persons addressed by the apostle was of course wholly future, for they had not yet died; and the same is true of all the generations which followed. In regard to all these, it was as actually future if progressive, as it could be if simultaneous. The resurrection of the whole human race, from Adam to his latest posterity, taken as one continuous event, even if it had been progressive until that time, was not fully completed when the Scriptures were written, nor is it now. It was perfectly natural, therefore, to speak of it in the future tense, as of an event not wholly accomplished. When Paul testified that God "*will render* to every man according to his deeds," Rom. ii. 6, I apprehend he did not announce a new principle of divine government, which had not hitherto been in operation, and which should remain inoperative until the final consummation of all things. On the contrary, he declared the simple fact of

God's eternal justice, which had been, was then, and would forever continue to be, in active operation; for He changes not. So when he says that all shall be made alive, or raised from the dead, he need not be understood to mean, that none have yet been raised, but only that the universal resurrection, already commenced and in progress, shall in due time be consummated. The same form of speech is in common use at the present day.

(c.) It is further objected against the theory of a progressive resurrection, that the resurrection is not only described in general terms as future, but that it is sometimes described as occurring at a definite future period; namely, "at the last trump," when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." I Cor. xv. 51-54; I Thess. iv. 13-18. At that time, it is alleged, "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed;" and "the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." If we were utterly unable to interpret these declarations in a manner consistent with what is elsewhere said by the same apostle, and by our Lord, we might better confess our own lack of skill and knowledge, than to suppose there is any actual contradiction between them. As Christians, we are bound to believe that these or the other passages are susceptible of a different interpretation; that these do not necessarily imply a future simultaneous universal resurrection, or that the others do not recognize the resurrection as already commenced and in progress. Some of the reasons have already been stated, for believing that the natural is the true interpretation of those passages which seem to indicate a progressive resurrection. It remains to inquire whether these may not be so interpreted that all shall be harmonious.

Some have proposed a change of translation: "For a trumpet will sound, and the dead will have been raised incorruptible, and we shall be

changed."—*Lewis*. Again: "For the Lord himself, with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God, will descend from heaven; and the dead in Christ will be previously anastazized," or raised.

—*Lee*. Without assuming to pronounce upon the accuracy of the proposed new translations, I am content, in this discussion, to abide by the common version, in developing the idea embraced in the language of the apostle. He assures the Thessalonians that the Lord will come "with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up," &c. Whatever else this may mean, it cannot mean less than that the dead shall be raised *before* the living shall be changed. But to the Corinthians, he says, "we shall all (that is, the living) be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Assuming that both the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living shall occur "at the last trump," and that the whole process shall be completed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," how are we to understand the declaration that "the dead in Christ shall rise first"? that is, before the living shall be changed and caught up. It seems incredible that a succession of time should be recognized, and a distinction made between first and following, when the whole transaction occupies but a moment, an atom or indivisible point of time, represented by the twinkling of an eye. Such a succession or distinction is utterly incomprehensible; and its object, or its practical advantage, is equally incomprehensible. But if we take the phrase "shall be raised" to be equivalent to "shall have been raised," and understand the apostle to mean that the dead shall have been raised *before* the trumpet shall give the signal for the instantaneous and simultaneous change of the living, the succession of time, or the distinction between what precedes and what follows, is palpable, and some of the practical results are easily im-

agined. Thus interpreted, the description is not inconsistent with those Scriptures which seem to teach a progressive resurrection. This interpretation derives support from the declaration, that "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," when he "shall descend from heaven — with the trump of God." The most natural and obvious import of this language is, that they shall be brought with Jesus from heaven, as living and intelligent witnesses of the stupendous work about to be wrought. "The dead are already risen, and will reappear with Christ at his reappearance." — *Jowett*. I am aware that some understand the apostle to mean, that as God had formerly raised Jesus from the dead, so also he would hereafter raise all mankind with him. But this involves a very unusual sense of the word *σύν*, *with*, connecting together, and representing as coexistent, events between which is an interval of thousands of years. Jesus was raised nearly two thousand years ago. If none other has been raised, or shall be raised until the end of the world, it is certainly unnatural to say that they are raised "with him," or that he and they are raised together. But if the obvious meaning be the true one, namely, that the dead, having already been raised, shall be brought with or shall accompany the Lord Jesus when he shall come in glory to "change" the living, then the whole passage is in harmony with those Scriptures which otherwise appear contradictory.

Additional evidence that such is the proper force of the words here translated "shall be raised" is derived from a consideration of the apostle's specific design in each place. The error which he desired to correct in the Corinthian church is indicated in the question, "How say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?" ver. 12. It was a question, not of *time*, but of *fact*. To this subject the argument is addressed, ver. 13-34. In ver. 35, an incidental objection to the doctrine is stated: "But some man will say, how are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" In reply, the apostle

discusses the *manner* of the resurrection, and shows the objection to be unfounded, ver. 35-50. Here, as before, the question was one of *fact*, not of *time*. At ver. 51, or, as some suppose, at ver. 50, there is another change in the general subject of discourse. Some connect ver. 50 with what precedes, some, with what follows; and some, with both. The construction of that verse, however, does not materially affect the present argument. In the former part of the chapter, the certainty and the manner of the resurrection are fully discussed, and the change produced by it is described. What follows, ver. 51-53, relates to a different branch of the same general subject; namely, to the change to be wrought in the living. Let it be observed, then, that in ver. 51-53, the apostle's specific design was, not to describe the resurrection of the dead, which he had already discussed at full length, but to announce and describe the change of the living, of those who should "not sleep," but should "remain unto the coming of the Lord;" which change he had not before mentioned. "(51) Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed (52), in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Such is his annunciation; such, the doctrine which he had not previously announced; and he enforces it thus: "(53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." He had already declared that those who died in Adam should be changed, in the resurrection, from corruption to incorruption, from dishonor to glory, from weakness to power, and should take on a spiritual body instead of a natural body. He now declares that those "which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" shall not die, yet they shall experience a change equivalent to that which is wrought on others through death and the resurrection. It was as true in regard to those who should not die, as in regard to those who should die, that "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Such was the "mys-

tery" which Paul now announced to his Corinthian brethren; namely, a doctrine which he had not previously communicated to them. It was this change of the living, not the resurrection of the dead, which he here declared should be instantaneous and simultaneous "at the last trump." The latter clause of ver. 52, is a parenthesis, and is so marked by Griesbach, Knapp, and Bloomfield; being a recapitulation or reaffirmation of the doctrines previously stated. He had very fully spoken of the resurrection of the dead; he had now declared the "mystery" that even those who shall not die shall nevertheless "be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" and, before stating the reason why such a change was indispensable, he reasserts emphatically, in parenthesis, "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." He does not say, the trumpet shall sound, and *then* the dead shall be raised, or the dead shall be raised when the trumpet shall sound; nor does he, in this parenthesis, represent either of the events as dependent on the other. He had previously declared that the living shall be changed, "at the last trump;" but he does not repeat the declaration here. He had not previously declared that the dead shall be raised, "at the last trump;" nor does he make such a declaration here. He simply reaffirms, by way of emphasis, the three important facts previously announced: "The trumpet shall sound." "The dead shall be raised incorruptible." "We shall be changed." The change shall be universal, though wrought in a different manner on different individuals. All "have borne the image of the earthy;" in like manner all "shall bear the image of the heavenly." On those who die, the change is wrought through the resurrection. On those who shall not die, an equivalent change shall be wrought instantaneously, "at the last trump." The definite future time, therefore, indicated by "the last trump," relates directly to this change of the living, not to the resurrection of the dead; and the whole passage is

consistent with a progressive resurrection of the dead, commencing with the first triumph of death, and ending before the simultaneous change of the living.

The specific design of the apostle in 1 Thess. iv. 13-18, was somewhat different. There is no evidence that any of the believers at Thessalonica said "that there is no resurrection of the dead." Their error consisted rather in the belief that Jesus, at his coming, would establish an earthly kingdom, in which his living disciples would enjoy signal advantages. A similar expectation induced the request of James and John: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory," Mark x. 37; or, "in thy kingdom." Matt. xx. 21. It seems also to have been expected that all who should die previously to the coming of the Lord would lose all participation in the benefits and glories of his kingdom. Hence the sorrow indulged on account of the departed. "Living in the daily hope of the Lord's return with the glory of his Father, and looking for the sign of the Son of man in heaven, they naturally regarded death as an intervening enemy, that might separate them from that day of the Lord, and deprive them of being the living witnesses of his triumph, the immediate sharers in his kingdom." — *Thom.* Substantially the same view of the error, which this passage was specifically designed to correct, is expressed by other writers. This epistle "seems to have been occasioned partly by his wish to express his earnest affection for the Thessalonian Christians, and to encourage them under their persecutions; but it was also called for by some errors into which they had fallen. Many of the new converts were uneasy about the state of their relatives or friends who had died since their conversion. They feared that those departed Christians would lose the happiness of witnessing their Lord's second coming, which they expected soon to behold." — *Conybeare.* "Paul seems in Thessalonica to have especially preached Christ, as king of the kingdom of God, and the hope of the

setting up of that kingdom on earth. This the Christians there had eagerly caught up, but not without misapprehensions and mistakes, as being inexperienced in that difficult field. Their view was directed more to externals, more to the outward glory of that kingdom, than to the moral conditions of participation in it, and to its spiritual nature. Because of this outward relation to such hopes, it also happened that (as Timothy, we may suppose, had reported) the Christians were in anxiety whether their dear departed ones would not lose the kingdom of God, and those only come to the enjoyment of it who should be alive at the second coming of the Lord. Now Paul relieves them on that point by the assurance that the dead would rise first, and the living be, along with them, lifted into the air to meet the Lord."—*Olshausen*. If it was his special design to rectify this error, we perceive a peculiar propriety in the apostle's language. He assures them "that the coming of the Lord" is not for the purpose of establishing a temporal kingdom on the earth, and of dwelling here with man; but for the more glorious purpose of changing the living into a state which others attained through death and the resurrection, and of taking them with him to heaven; so that thenceforth both the raised and the changed may "ever be with the Lord." He further assures them that those who have fallen asleep shall not be excluded from witnessing this glorious consummation, because they shall be previously raised, and shall in fact accompany the Lord "at his coming." His specific design, therefore, was not to describe the *process* nor even to affirm the *fact* of the resurrection of the dead. The fact is assumed as uncontradicted, and is urged in proof that those who fall asleep do not incur the apprehended loss, but shall be witnesses of the crowning glory of Christ's kingdom; namely, the final extinction of death and corruption, with their whole train of physical and moral imperfections, and the completed change of the whole human family from mortality to immortality. And even if the Thessalonians,

as some suppose, doubted or disbelieved the doctrine of the resurrection, and feared that their deceased friends had utterly perished, the proper force of the phrase translated "the dead in Christ shall rise first" remains as before stated. For in such case, the apostle must be understood to affirm first, that the dead shall be raised, omitting the argument employed in 1 Cor. xv. 13-20; and second, that, because they are are thus raised, and are permitted to be witnesses of the glorious change accomplished at the coming of the Lord, those who fall asleep suffer no loss, and their surviving friends should not grieve immoderately. In either case, as the resurrection is a continuous event, not then or even now fully completed, when speaking of it as a whole, it was natural and proper to say "the dead in Christ shall rise first;" yet, with special reference to the time of the "coming," after which there shall be no more death, the expression is equivalent to "the dead in Christ shall have been raised," or the dead shall previously have been raised in Christ.

Because Paul says, "the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them," &c., it has been alleged that the second named event immediately succeeds the former, and that both succeed "the trump of God." It has already been observed, that the least which the word *first* can denote here, is that the resurrection of the dead precedes the change of the living; that the resurrection is completed before the living are "caught up." But this is not the only allowable construction of the word "first," as here used. It may be understood to denote, not only that the resurrection of the dead precedes the change of the living, but that it also precedes the sounding of "the trump of God." It may as properly qualify the preceding as the following words. It is so used elsewhere. For example: "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away *first*." 2 Thess. ii. 3. That is, the day shall come; but a falling away will come previously. Again: "As to the lightning, that

lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be in his day. But *first* must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation." Luke xvii. 24, 25. See also Luke xiv. 28, 31; Rom. xv. 24; 2 Cor. viii. 5. Thus construed, this passage may be understood to teach, that the Lord himself shall descend, with the trump of God; but the dead shall be previously raised in Christ, and shall accompany him; and when he shall thus descend, bringing them with him as witnesses, the living shall be changed, and all shall be received up into heaven. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

To conclude: it is not pretended that the theory of a progressive resurrection, keeping even pace with death from the beginning to the end of its reign, is entirely free from difficulty. But, in my judgment, the objections against it are less formidable than those which attend either of the other two theories examined; and besides these three, I am not aware of any other. I accept, this, therefore, as the true theory. And whatever difficulty I may encounter in interpreting any portion of the Scriptures consistently with it, I attribute rather to my own lack of knowledge and skill, than to any inherent contradiction between the several testimonies. In this life, "we walk by faith, not by sight." We believe many doctrines which we cannot demonstrate to be true; yet we believe them unhesitatingly, because belief is more consistent with what we know, and is attended by fewer and less troublesome difficulties, than unbelief. Thus in the present case, while I freely acknowledge my inability to demonstrate the truth of a progressive resurrection, I nevertheless believe it to be a truth, because it seems harmonious with the general testimony of revelation, and with the character of the "Father of spirits," and because fewer and less urgent difficulties beset me in accepting it as the truth, than in rejecting it as an error.

III. Do the several descriptions of the resurrection justify the belief, that the whole human race shall be raised

from the dead (or changed), and that, when thus raised (or changed), all shall be pure, and holy, and prepared for the enjoyment of permanent happiness? For obvious reasons, I shall freely quote the testimony of devout Christians, who, while unable, as I think, to comprehend "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," Rom. xv. 29, have yet clearly perceived and faithfully delineated some detached portions of it.

1. In regard to the universal extent of the revivifying process, Paul says, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. xv. 22. In the note on this verse, I have already quoted the admission of Thom, Bloomfield, Stanley, and Rosenmuller, that *all* is to be understood in its natural sense; that just so many as die in Adam shall also be made alive in Christ. The same fact is also admitted by Locke, Macknight, and others. I quote one additional testimony: "Many commentators have supposed that the word *all* here refers only to believers, meaning all who were united to Christ, or all who were his friends; all included in a covenant with him; as the word *all* in the former member of the sentence means all who were included in the covenant with Adam; that is, all mankind. But to this view there are manifest objections. (1) It is not the obvious sense; it is not that which will occur to the great mass of men who interpret the Scriptures on the principles of common sense; it is an interpretation which is to be made out by reasoning and theology, — always a suspicious circumstance in interpreting the Bible. (2) It is not necessary. All the wicked will be raised up from the dead, as well as the righteous. (3) The form of the passage requires us to understand the word *all* in the same sense in both members, unless there be some indispensable necessity for limiting the one or the other. (4) The argument of the apostle requires this. It is complete, if it be shown that *all* shall be raised up, whatever may become of them afterwards. The sceptre of death shall be broken, and his dominion destroyed, by the fact that all shall be

raised from the dead."—*Barnes*. All who die, then, shall be made alive. And of those who die not, but remain alive "at the last trump," it is declared that they shall experience a change equivalent to that which is wrought in others through death and the resurrection. The final result is the same, as if absolutely universal death were succeeded by an absolutely universal resurrection. In the earthly nature, all are mortal; and all shall become partakers of immortal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. Shall all who are raised (or changed) be pure, and holy, and prepared for the enjoyment of permanent happiness? Omitting from the present argument the general testimony of the Scriptures that it is the divine purpose to exterminate sin and to establish universal holiness, as well as the evidence of the same fact embraced in the language of our Lord and his apostles elsewhere concerning the resurrection, the question may be safely rested on this single chapter. Having declared that all shall be made alive, the apostle describes the condition into which they shall be raised, in ver. 42-49: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." It is agreed, almost unanimously, that this description implies the holiness and happiness of all who are included in it. "The argument here (ver. 49) is, that the connection which is formed between the believer and the Saviour is as close as that which subsisted between him and Adam; and as that connection with Adam involved the certainty that he would be subjected to pain, sin, sickness, and death, so the connection with Christ involves the certainty that he

will like him be free from sin, sickness, pain, and death, and like him will have a body that is pure, incorruptible, and immortal."—*Barnes*. But if to "bear the image of the heavenly" involves freedom from sin and pain, how does *Barnes* avoid the conclusion that all shall be holy and happy? And why does he restrict the description to the "believer," while he admits that a universal resurrection is taught in ver. 22? The answer is found in his note on ver. 23: "*They that are Christ's*. They who are Christians. The apostle, though in ver. 22 he had stated the truth that all the dead would rise, yet here only mentions Christians, because to them only would the doctrine be any consolation, and because it was to them particularly that this whole argument was addressed." A like interpretation of the passage is given by another eminent writer, for the specific reason that the description of the resurrection-state is inconsistent with the existence of sin and misery. On ver. 42, he says: "'The resurrection of the dead,' here spoken of, is not the resurrection of all mankind in common, but only the resurrection of the just. From the 23d verse to the end of the chapter, all that he says of the resurrection is a description only of the resurrection of the just, though he calls it here by the general name of the resurrection of the dead. That this is so, there is so much evidence, that there is scarcely a verse, from the 41st to the end, that does not evince it." Observe, now, the character of this evidence. "First. What in this resurrection is raised, St. Paul assures us, ver. 43, is raised in glory; but the wicked are not raised in glory. Secondly. He says, we (speaking in the name of all that shall then be raised) shall bear the image of the heavenly Adam, ver. 49; which cannot belong to the wicked. We shall all be changed, that, by putting on incorruptibility and immortality, death may be swallowed up of victory, which God giveth us through our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 51-54, 57; which cannot likewise belong to the damned. And therefore *we* and *us* must be understood to be spoken in the

name of the dead that are Christ's, who are to be raised by themselves before the rest of mankind. Thirdly. He says, ver. 52, that when the dead are raised, they who are alive shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Now that these dead are only the dead in Christ, which shall rise first, and shall be caught in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, is plain from 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. Fourthly. He teaches, ver. 51, that, by this corruptible putting on incorruption, is brought to pass the saying, that 'Death is swallowed up of victory.' But I think nobody will say that the wicked have victory over death! Yet that, according to the apostle, here belongs to all those whose corruptible bodies have put on incorruption; which, therefore, must be only those that rise the second in order. From whence it is clear that their resurrection alone is that which is here mentioned and described. Fifthly. A further proof whereof is, ver. 56, 57, in that their sins being taken away, the sting whereby death kills is taken away. And hence St. Paul says, God hath given *us* the victory, which is the same *us*, or *we*, who should bear the image of the heavenly Adam, ver. 49; and the same *we*, who should all be changed, ver. 51, 52. All which places can, therefore, belong to none but those who are Christ's, who shall be raised by themselves, the second in order, before the rest of the dead." — *Locke*. The length of this quotation is justified by its importance. *Locke* was unquestionably right in his belief that the apostle's language is inconsistent with the theory that any of those who are thus raised shall *then* be "wicked," or "damned;" but, on the contrary, it is properly applicable only to those who shall *then* be pure, free from sin, and exempt from misery or death. I am not aware that any commentators have expressed a different opinion on this point. But they are not so unanimous, in supposing the apostle to include a less number in his description of the resurrection, ver. 42-49, than in his annunciation of the fact, ver. 22. Seeing no reasonable evidence of any such change, as to the number of persons, and unprepared to

believe that all men shall be partakers of such a glorious resurrection, some have supposed the apostle to speak only of believers, or the converted, in ver. 22. Thus, *Hammond*, *Whitby*, *Grotius*, *Doddridge*, and perhaps others. But most commentators regard this as a forced and unnatural interpretation, and insist that, in ver. 22, the universal resurrection of the race is clearly announced. Hence it appears, that, among commentators who reject the doctrine of universal holiness and happiness, there is a general agreement that a universal resurrection is announced in ver. 22; and an almost or entirely unanimous agreement that the description in ver. 42-49 can properly apply to none except those who are raised to a condition of holiness and happiness; while a class, respectable both in number and in character, insist that the description in ver. 42-49 applies to all who are included in the announcement in ver. 22. Each has a portion of the truth. Their combined testimony embraces the whole truth.

The principal difficulty under which commentators have labored is, that, while they believe that some will forever be "wicked" and "damned," they have not been able to perceive how any, who shall be raised in the manner here described, can then be "wicked," or "damned." But the apostle gives no intimation that any shall be either "wicked" or "damned," after the resurrection; and the difficulty is unfounded and imaginary. In the present life, all men are sinful, in a less or greater degree. How then are all, or even any, raised in the condition indicated? The apostle answers this question by the assurance that an important change is wrought through death and the resurrection. The two conditions of mankind are vividly contrasted in ver. 42-49. On the one hand is the natural body, bearing the image of the earthy, and characterized by corruption, dishonor, and weakness; on the other, is the spiritual body, bearing the image of the heavenly, and characterized by incorruption, glory, and power. This change, which is great in regard to the least

sinful, is greater in regard to the most sinful; yet it is of a like character and equally effectual in regard to all. After this change, none will remain "wicked," or "damned," but all will be pure and saved. There is no necessity, therefore, to suppose that the apostle includes less than all, either in the annunciation, ver. 22, or in the description, ver. 42-49. By duly considering this contrast, we may readily credit the assurance that, although all men are on earth subject to vanity and sin, they shall be free from both in the future life, when God shall have given them the victory over death, clothed them in the image of Christ, and constituted them "the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Luke xx. 36.

The same result is indicated by the general scope and manifest object of this whole chapter. It was designed to meet and confute the allegation "that there is no resurrection of the dead." Hence Paul argued "the resurrection of the dead" in general terms; and the natural import of his language is, that the resurrection is as extensive as death in its operation, ver. 21, 22. The only classification he makes is that between Christ and mankind generally, ver. 20, 23; or, if a third class be implied, it consists of those who shall neither die nor be raised, but shall be changed, "at the last trump," ver. 51, 52. And when he answers the question in regard to the manner of the resurrection, his language is of the same universal character: "So also is the resurrection of the dead," ver. 42. He says not, so also is the resurrection of the just, or of any other fractional portion of mankind; but, "so also is the resurrection of the dead," that is, of all the dead. It will be remembered that Paul assured Felix that he cherished "hope towards God — that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust," Acts xxiv. 15. If all shall be raised in the manner here described, he might well hope for such an event; and this confirms the probability that he here describes the resurrection of all; namely, those who were just and those who were unjust

on the earth, but who all bear the image of Christ in heaven. If he do not include them who are now wicked and unjust in his description, ver. 42-49, where does he describe their resurrection? It will not avail, to say that he omits the description altogether, and leaves it to be inferred that the wicked shall be subsequently raised and condemned. He gives no intimation that another resurrection shall succeed that which he describes. On the contrary, he unequivocally asserts that when the resurrection which he describes shall have been fully accomplished, the reign of death shall be absolutely ended. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory," ver. 54; its sting is destroyed, and the victory given by the Father to his children through his Son Jesus Christ, ver. 55-57. It is absurd to suppose that death shall hold dominion over a single individual, after the period here described, or that any shall then remain to be raised.

We come, then, to this ultimate result. The apostle asserts that all shall be made alive in Christ; that is, the dead shall be raised, and the living shall be changed. He declares that this resurrection and change involve the destruction of the last enemy, death, which shall be swallowed up in victory, or utterly abolished. He describes the character and results of this resurrection and change, the transformation through which the natural body, and corruption, dishonor, weakness, and mortality, are succeeded by the spiritual body, by incorruption, glory, power, and immortality; so that those who had borne the image of the earthy are made to bear the image of the heavenly.

Such is his description of the resurrection; and it so manifestly recognizes the purity of those who are thus raised, and their capability of permanent happiness, that no sane man affirms the contrary. Even those who believe not that all shall be holy and happy, admit that this description can apply only to such; and their efforts to restrict it to a less number than all who die in Adam are unsatisfactory

and ineffectual. Notwithstanding, therefore, all the special pleading to the contrary, we may understand the apostle's language in its broad and most obvious sense; we may rejoice with him in the hope that both the just and the unjust shall be raised in a state of purity and blessedness; and we should unite with him in his devout thanksgiving, — "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

END OF I. CORINTHIANS.

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is

CHAPTER I.

1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.* See note on Rom. i. 1. ¶ *By the will of God.* Although not one of the original Twelve, yet Paul asserts that he was divinely commissioned, and that his apostolical authority was equal to that of the other apostles. See note on 1 Cor. i. 1. ¶ *And Timothy our brother.* Here, as in the epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, Paul associates his beloved brother Timothy with himself, in his salutation to the church. In like manner, he introduces the name of Sosthenes, in his first epistle to the Corinthians. See note on 1 Cor. i. 1. Timothy was especially dear to Paul, as one of his converts, as his companion in many labors, and as a remarkably pure-minded and devout Christian. See note on Rom. xvi. 21. ¶ *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth.* See note on 1 Cor. i. 2. ¶ *With all the saints which are in all Achaia.* This was the general name of Greece, but especially of the southern province, of which Corinth was the principal city. See note on Acts xviii. 12. At the time of writing this epistle, Paul was in Macedonia, the northern province of Greece. See ch. vii. 5. Several churches had been planted in Achaia, among which were those at Athens, Acts xvii. 15-34, and at Cenehrea, Rom. xvi. 1. It is supposed that some of the disorders in the Corinthian church, which the apostle had so faithfully rebuked in his first

at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia :

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed *be* God, even the Fa-

epistle, had spread into the neighboring churches; and that for this reason he desired that they should receive copies of this epistle, or, at the least, be made acquainted with its contents, and receive assurance of his lively interest in their welfare.

2. *Grace be to you, &c.* See note on Rom. i. 7.

3. *Blessed be God.* At the outset of the epistle, for this is properly its commencement, the preceding sentences being merely salutatory, the apostle expresses devout thankfulness to God for divine aid in his labors and consolation in his trials. He deeply realized his own weakness, and his dependence on God for assistance; and he was ready to confess his dependence before men, and his gratitude to the Giver of all good gifts, for all his success and for all his spiritual enjoyments. "It is very observable that eleven out of St. Paul's thirteen epistles begin with exclamations of joy, praise, and thanksgiving. As soon as he thought of a Christian church, planted in one place or another, there seems to have been a flow of most lively affection accompanying the idea, in which all sensibility of his temporal afflictions or theirs was swallowed up, and the fulness of his heart must vent itself in such cheerful, exalted, and devout language." — *Doddridje.* ¶ *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* He acknowledges God as the original source of all power and goodness. He describes him as the Father of our

ther of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

Lord Jesus Christ, because through this his well-beloved Son, he had communicated to men the gospel of grace and of salvation. It is in fact not only an acknowledgment of God, as the fountain of grace, but of Jesus Christ the Son of God, through whom that grace flows freely to mankind. ¶ *The Father of mercies.* This may be regarded as a Hebraism, meaning *merciful Father*. Yet both this and the following appellation seem to convey a still more energetic idea, recognizing God as the original source of mercy and consolation, whence all which is received by men or imparted by them to each other is derived. "The import here conveyed is, as Chrysostom and the ancient commentators point out, that God is the fountain of mercy, and the spring of comfort."—*Bloomfield*. ¶ *And the God of all comfort.* The only source from which effectual comfort can come. In the trials and afflictions to which we are subject, the sympathy of friends is grateful and their efforts to console us deserve our gratitude. But their efforts are often unavailing. To God alone can we look with perfect confidence, as a Being who is both able and willing to overrule all things for our good, and to make our keenest sufferings conducive to our highest good. Rom. viii. 28; Heb. xii. 9-11. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Ps. xli. 1. These appellations seem to have been chosen, in preference to others, because consolation under trials is the first blessing named in what follows; just as, when exhorting his brethren to "live in peace" with each other, he assures them that "the God of love and peace" will add his blessing to their affectionate endeavors, ch. xiii. 11.

4. *Who comforteth us, &c.* The apostle is here understood to refer to himself and his fellow-apostles and public advocates of the gospel, and to the comfort which they had derived in all their trials through the influence of divine grace in their hearts, and

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are

through a confident "trust in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." 1 Tim. iv. 10. ¶ *That we may be able to comfort them, &c.* This was one important result of the comfort which he had received. He does not say it was the only or even the chief result; but it was the one which then chiefly rested on his mind, as connected with one principal object of this epistle; namely, to comfort those who had been made sad by their former errors and misconduct and by the rebukes previously administered. See ch. ii. Doubtless, he who has received comfort in trials and afflictions, is the better prepared to comfort others who are in the like distress. Whether such afflictions result from the same cause or not, there is only one source from which effectual comfort can be drawn. And he who has tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious is thereby enabled to guide others to the same fountain of consolation. ¶ *By the comfort wherewith, &c.* By the same comfort. By inducing them to trust in God, and to open their hearts to the influence of his Spirit. By displaying to them the beauties of God's character and the reasonable nature of all his requirements, so that they may love and obey him. By impressing on their hearts the glorious truth that God is their Father and that they are his children, and that he is both able and willing to bestow on them richer blessings than they can bestow on their children, Matt. vii. 9-11, so that they may confide in him for all things, as the infant seeks shelter in the parent's bosom. When such confidence is attained, full comfort is experienced. We may, then, not only bless God for all our enjoyments, but may even rejoice in tribulation, through faith that it shall result in blessings. Rom. v. 3-5.

5. *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us.* As we experience manifold sufferings like those which Christ endured; or rather, as we endure many sufferings, on account of Christ, or for

in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same suf-

the sake of his gospel. "As the sufferings for Christ and his gospel abound in us." — *Macknight*. ¶ *So our consolation also aboundeth by Christ*. In Paul's case, the sufferings and the consolation were commensurate with each other. The more firmly he believed in the divine mission and the resurrection of Christ, the more firmly he proclaimed him as the Son of God and exposed himself to persecution; and just so much the more confidently he trusted in Christ and enjoyed fellowship with him in spirit. The more confidently he believed the gospel of Christ, the more fearlessly he preached it to others, at much personal hazard; and just so much the more abundantly was his own heart cheered by its rich promises and assurances. "In proportion to the sufferings to which the gospel of Christ exposes us, so does the same gospel supply us with abundant consolation." — *Bloomfield*.

6. *And whether we be afflicted*. If we endure persecution and distress. One source of the apostle's consolation is indicated in this verse; namely, that his sufferings were conducive to the benefit of his brethren, that in thus suffering he was imitating his Master, and that individual inconvenience was overbalanced by general good. ¶ *It is for your consolation and salvation*. My labors, which involve affliction, conduce to your comfort, by enabling you to understand the divine character better, and the more clearly to comprehend the great truths of the gospel; and thus your faith in God and in the gospel of his Son becomes more strong, and you more abundantly enjoy that special salvation which is the

ferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you *is* steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation.

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that

fruit of faith. The Apostle Paul was not accustomed to represent his labors or sufferings as the procuring cause of salvation in the future life. He did not expect to obtain immortal blessedness for himself, much less for others, by his individual exertions. ¶ *Which is effectual, &c.* The comfort and joy which you experience, through that faith which bringeth salvation, *effectually* sustains you when called to endure similar sufferings; it enables you to bear persecution for the gospel's sake, and comforts your hearts in the midst of affliction. ¶ *Or whether we be comforted, &c.* As our labors, attended by persecution, have tended to increase and confirm your faith, thus enabling you to witness a good confession, so also the comfort which we have experienced is an encouragement to you, that you shall be comforted in like manner. As you witness the consoling effects of the gospel in us, you are stimulated to a livelier faith, a more confident trust, and a more cheerful obedience, and you enjoy comfort and salvation.

7. *And our hope of you is steadfast*. We have a firm and confident hope. ¶ *That as ye are partakers of the sufferings, &c.* By his own experience the apostle knew that the gospel yielded consolation to all who freely suffered for its sake; and he had no doubt that it would be equally effectual to the Corinthians in like circumstances.

8. *For we would not, brethren, have you to be ignorant*. We would have you to know; a phrase often used by Paul, in the same manner. Rom. i. 13; 1 Cor. x. 1; xii. 1; 1 Thess. iv. 13. It is generally supposed that the

we were pressed out of measure, above strength, inasmuch that we despaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we

trials which he proceeds to relate are the same to which he refers in ver. 4. ¶ *Of our trouble which came to us in Asia.* Commentators are not agreed concerning the particular events here indicated. Some suppose this trouble was occasioned by the persecutions at Lystra, Acts xiv. 19, 20; others, that it was occasioned by the commotions at Ephesus, Acts xix. 23-41. The latter supposition is more probable, inasmuch as the affair at Ephesus was more recent, and the *trouble* is mentioned as if it were yet very fresh in mind. Others still are of opinion that with these outward causes of trouble, the apostle included his infirmities of body, perhaps aggravated by personal abuse during the persecution. And it is not unlikely that he included, also, the anxiety which oppressed his mind, as to the disorders in the Corinthian church, and the effect which might be produced by his first epistle; whether it should be effectual to produce reformation, or whether his opposers should succeed in exciting ill-will against him, and in destroying his influence, and the prosperity of the church, together. This seems to be intimated in ver. 12. ¶ *That we were pressed out of measure.* A strong expression, denoting that the burden was well-nigh intolerable. ¶ *Above strength.* Beyond human endurance; more than could be borne by unaided strength. It was a case demanding special assistance from a higher power, like that mentioned in ch. xii. 9, in which divine strength has its perfect manifestation through human weakness. ¶ *Inasmuch that we despaired even of life.* If the reference be to the tumult at Ephesus, Acts xix. 23-41, as some suppose, he might well suppose his life was in peril. Had he been found by the mob, in the fury of their excitement, in all probability they would have destroyed him; as a like mob attempted, and nearly ac-

should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver:

complished, at Lystra, on a previous occasion. Acts xiv. 19. Some, however, suppose him to refer to an attack of disease, so violent that he despaired of life, believing his constitution could not withstand the shock.

9. *But we had the sentence of death within ourselves.* We felt ourselves doomed to death. We supposed we must sink under the crushing burden. Either the danger from without, the violence of his persecuting adversaries, was so great, that he supposed his life must be sacrificed; or the disease was so inveterate, that he regarded it as incurable. ¶ *That we should not trust in ourselves.* "This is an exceedingly beautiful and important sentiment. It teaches, that in the time to which Paul refers, he was in so great danger, and had so certain a prospect of death, he could put no reliance on himself. He felt that he must die; and that human aid was vain. According to every probability he would die; and all that he could do was to cast himself on the protection of that God who had power to save him, even then, if he chose; and who, if he did it, would exert power similar to that which is put forth when the dead are raised. The effect, therefore, of the near prospect of death was to lead him to put increased confidence in God." — *Barnes.* ¶ *But in God which raised the dead.* The God who can raise the dead can preserve the living, however great the peril. In that God alone could he safely trust, and to him alone look for deliverance in such extremity of danger. When speaking of consolation under affliction, Paul ascribes the blessing to "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;" but in reference to preservation from deadly peril, when human strength would avail nothing, he styles him "God which raiseth the dead." Note on ver. 3.

10. *Who delivered us from so great a*

in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us ;

death. From so terrible a death, as some say; a death attended by such terrific circumstances, such as being torn in pieces by wild beasts, or by an infuriated mob. Others more properly, I think, regard the phrase as equivalent to, Who delivered us from such deadly peril, or from so great danger of death. Such deliverance the apostle considered so extraordinary, involving the exercise of such superhuman power, that none except "God who raised the dead" could have accomplished it. He felt that he owed this renewed gift of life, so to speak, to the same God who alone can reanimate the literally dead. And for this gift, among others, he expresses his devout gratitude and thankfulness, ver. 3. ¶ *And doth deliver.* This is an expression of confidence in the protecting care and providence of God; an acknowledgment of constant dependence on God for protection amid the perils which constantly surrounded him. He was conscious of his continual exposure to death, 1 Cor. xv. 31, and he here declares his conviction, not only that God appeared on his behalf, in the special season of peril to which he had referred, but that the same shield of divine preservation had been extended over him in subsequent perils, up to the present time. To the same effect, and in similar language, he says, in reference to an attempt of the Jews to kill him, "Having therefore obtained help from God, I continue unto this day." Acts xxvi. 22. ¶ *In whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.* That he will continue to preserve us in the perils which we may hereafter encounter. Paul well understood the perilous nature of the enterprise in which he was engaged. His past experience had taught him to expect violent opposition, both from bigotted Jews and unbelieving Gentiles. What had uniformly happened he had reason to expect would continue. The same truth was also impressed on his mind by inspiration. When bidding a final farewell to the elders of the Ephesian church, he said,

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11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." Acts xx. 22, 23. Yet with this clear perception of the danger, he trusted in God for protection and deliverance. He believed that God would preserve his life so long as his labors were necessary to the promulgation and establishment of the gospel. And when at last his earthly labors should cease, and he should seal his faithfulness in his own blood, he had equal confidence that "God who raiseth the dead" would preserve him from any real harm, and would bestow on him immortal life and blessedness.

11. *Ye also helping together by prayer for us.* Paul offered prayers on behalf of his brethren, Rom. i. 9, and desired their prayers on his own behalf, 1 Thess. v. 25; 2 Thess. iii. 1. He expresses the desire here, that his Corinthian brethren should remember him in prayer; and his belief that they had done so. "You too co-operating in supplication on our behalf." — *Bloomfield.* "The idea is, that Paul felt that his trials might be turned to good account, and give occasion for thanksgiving; and that this was to be accomplished by the aid of the prayers of his fellow Christians. He felt that the church was one, and that Christians should sympathize with one another. He evinced deep humility and tender regard for the Corinthians when he called on them to aid him by their prayers. Nothing would be better calculated to excite their tender affection and regard than thus to call on them to sympathize with him in his trials, and to pray that those trials might result in thanksgiving throughout the churches." — *Barnes.* ¶ *That for the gift bestowed upon us, &c.* The construction of this part of the verse is involved and obscure, and its precise meaning difficult to be perceived, however obvious the general idea may be. It has been variously translated. "So as the gift which cometh to us through

gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

12 For our rejoicing is this, the

many persons may by many persons be thankfully acknowledged for us." — *Macknight*. "That so the gracious gift (of future deliverance) being bestowed on me, by means of the intercession of many persons, may, by many persons, for me, be acknowledged with thanks." — *Bloomfield*. "That from many persons thanks may be given on our behalf for the gifts bestowed on us by many." — *Haweis*. "That thanksgiving may from many tongues be offered up on my behalf, for the blessing gained to me by many prayers. Literally, that from many persons the gift given to me by means of many may have thanks returned for it on my behalf." — *Conybeare*. The idea suggested parenthetically in the translation by Bloomfield is probably correct; that the apostle besought the prayers of his brethren for that future deliverance which he trusted he should receive, ver. 10, so that they might unitedly give thanks for it, in due time, as a gracious answer to their united prayers. "Nothing can be more reasonable than that mercies obtained by prayer should be owned in praise." — *Doddridge*. Some commentators suppose the reference to be to the past deliverance, as obtained through the prayers of the church, or, as some think, through the personal assistance of certain friends who interposed on his behalf when in deadly peril; but I prefer the interpretation already given. The great idea which underlies the whole is, that in all the perils of life, indeed at all times and under all circumstances, our only sure reliance for support and preservation is on him who not only creates and sustains the living, but also raises the dead; that it becomes us to acknowledge our own weakness and dependence, and to implore divine assistance; and that we should thankfully acknowledge the gifts bestowed on ourselves and on our brethren.

12. For, &c. "The mention of his

testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the

sufferings now ceases, and Paul passes to himself and his position with regard to the Corinthians. The *καρ* forms the transition in such a way that the apostle grounds his claim to the sympathy of the Corinthians upon his sincerity, as if 'and I am not unworthy of your intercession' had been supplied." — *Olshausen*. Those who understand the trouble of the apostle, ver. 8, to have been partly occasioned by his anxiety concerning the effect of his former epistle, suppose also that what follows was partly designed as a protestation that even his most severe rebukes were prompted by an affectionate regard for their welfare. However this may be, his language must be regarded as repelling the insinuations which continued to be made by his adversaries. He had declared his intention to make an early visit to Corinth, and had intimated that he might have occasion for severity in the exercise of his apostolical power, 1 Cor. iv. 19-21. The contemplated journey had been delayed, for reasons assigned in ver. 15-24. It would seem that his adversaries accused him of fickleness of purpose, ver. 17, of fear to administer severe discipline, ch. x. 9-11, and of using ambiguous language, saying one thing and meaning another, ver. 12, 17, 18. "It is against these insinuations that the apostle remonstrates with the indignation natural to an honorable mind unjustly suspected. At the same time, it must be observed that, till the tenth chapter, this indignation is kept within bounds; it is only by covert allusions that we discover, in the earlier part of the epistle, the real occasion of his remarks; and as if restrained, partly by affection, partly by prudence, his chief object here seems to be to conciliate his readers, so as to prevent, if possible, an entire and open rupture." — *Stanley*. † *Our rejoicing is this*. Elsewhere translated, *glorifying*, and *boasting*. See note on Rom. xv.

world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

17. In the midst of all his trials, Paul had this source of rejoicing, and of self-approval. To this he could appeal for justification against all his adversaries. ¶ *The testimony of our own conscience.* My conscience acquits me of all the faults charged against me by the false teachers. Paul acknowledged his imperfection before God, Rom. vii. 8-25; but in regard to these slanderous charges, his conscience was clear. He had the consciousness of honesty and integrity towards his brethren, and he knew that they had no just ground of accusation against him. An approving conscience is truly one of the most substantial causes for rejoicing and confident trust. 1 John iii. 20, 21. ¶ *That in simplicity.* Or singleness of mind, as in Eph. vi. 5. "The word means sincerity, candor, probity, plain-heartedness, Christian simplicity, frankness, integrity. See ch. xi. 3. It stands opposed to double-dealings and purposes; to deceitful appearances, and crafty plans; to mere policy and craftiness in accomplishing an object." — *Barnes.* All his conduct, his preaching, his written addresses, his promises, and his threatenings, were uttered in good faith, without the slightest intention to deceive. ¶ *And godly sincerity.* Literally, in the simplicity and sincerity of God, a common Hebrew idiom, to express the highest degree of simplicity and sincerity. The Greek word here rendered *sincerity* denotes transparency or clearness, as if in the light of the sun. The meaning of the two phrases together is, my conduct has been guided by purity of motive and transparent honesty. ¶ *Not with fleshly wisdom.* Not with that craft, policy, and expediency, which passes for wisdom among men of the world. His conduct was as free from worldly policy, as his preaching was free from the "enticing words of man's wisdom." 1 Cor. ii. 4. Both were governed by a higher principle. Even when baptizing himself to the prejudices of his brethren, which some might regard as mere policy, he truly acted upon principle; his object being to impart spir-

13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye

itual benefits to others, without regard to his personal convenience or comfort. 1 Cor. ix. 19-23. ¶ *But by the grace of God.* By divine favor; by the gracious guidance of the Spirit. Some suppose there is a reference to spiritual endowments or the extraordinary gifts of the spirit. But it is sufficient to understand the phrase as a contrast to the "fleshly wisdom" before mentioned. He had been guided, not by human wisdom or worldly policy, but by that wisdom which is from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, abundant in mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. Jas. iii. 17. ¶ *We have had our conversation.* Or conduct, according to the ancient meaning of the word. We have conducted, expresses the idea. The same Greek word is translated to *live*, in Heb. xiii. 18, and to *behave*, in 1 Tim. iii. 15. The term applies to conduct generally, whether in speech, writing, or action. In all these respects, the apostle's conscience witnessed that he had conducted with pure and honest motives, guided by divine wisdom. ¶ *In the world.* Among mankind generally, in all places, and in respect to all men. ¶ *And more abundantly to you-ward.* Especially in regard to yourselves; namely, the church at Corinth. What was true generally, was particularly true in this individual case. Whether in first preaching the gospel to them, or in his subsequent efforts, by exhortation, praise, or reproof, to establish them in the faith and to turn them away from false doctrines and sinful practices, he had been influenced by an earnest desire to promote their highest interests and to secure their welfare.

13. *For we write none other things,* &c. Much difference of opinion has been expressed by commentators in regard to this verse. The more general interpretation is this: "I write no other things to you than what are implied in the obvious meaning of the words which ye read, and also acknowledge to be my meaning; and I hope that

read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;

14 As also ye have acknowl-

to the end of your life ye will acknowledge that I always write sincerely. It seems the faction had affirmed, that some passages of Paul's former letter were designedly written in ambiguous language, that he might afterwards interpret them as suited his purpose. He therefore told them that the apology for altering his resolution respecting his journey to Corinth, which he was going to write to them, was to be understood by them according to the plain, obvious meaning of his words." — *Macknight*. Some, however, suggest a meaning which has an appearance of great probability: Your knowledge of me heretofore must convince you that what I have written is strictly true; that all my conduct has been marked with sincerity and honesty; you will therefore readily acknowledge that my failure to visit you, when expected, was not occasioned by any fickleness of purpose, but by the circumstances which I am about to mention. ¶ *Than what ye read*. If we suppose the apostle to be defending himself against a charge of ambiguity, then we may understand this word in its ordinary sense. But if we accept the other view of the preceding words, we must adopt the interpretation by *Doddridge*, who says the original word "is ambiguous, and may signify either to acknowledge, to know, or to read; but I think the sense here plainly determines it to knowing." ¶ *Or acknowledge*. Confess to be true; so fully realize, that you do not deny it. ¶ *And I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end*. Always acknowledge. I trust you will never have occasion to doubt my sincerity and honesty.

14. *As also ye have acknowledged us*. You have heretofore admitted my purity of motive and transparent integrity, and have boasted of me, or rejoiced in me, as a true apostle of Jesus Christ. ¶ *In part*. At least, a part of your number has thus acknowledged me. He perhaps refers to the

edged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

intelligence he had received through Titus, ch. vii. 6-16, of the favorable manner in which his former epistle had been received by the church, their acknowledgment of his authority, and their consequent reformation of many things which had been amiss; but recollecting that there were yet some who remained in opposition to him, disregarding his injunctions and defaming his personal character, he qualifies his general remark, saying, this is true in regard to a part of you, at least. ¶ *That we are your rejoicing*. That you rejoice in me, or boast in me, as a true apostle, honestly and sincerely devoted to the work of the gospel. ¶ *Even as ye also are ours*. As ye rejoice in me as a faithful apostle, so do I rejoice in you as obedient disciples. From what follows, the expression, though present in form, includes the force of the future; as ye are and will continue to be. ¶ *In the day of the Lord Jesus*. In the day when the Lord will distinguish, by visible tokens, between his true friends and mere pretenders. That day was not far distant. See note on 1 Cor. iv. 5. Some interpreters connect these concluding words with the former verse, regarding the intervening words as parenthetical: thus *Conybeare* translates, "I hope that even to the end you will acknowledge, as some of you have already acknowledged, that I am your boast, even as you are mine, in the day of the Lord Jesus." *Bloomfield* approves this construction, and it avoids some difficulties. The only change in meaning involved in this change of construction is this: in the one case the apostle expresses the hope that he shall be able to boast or rejoice in his brethren as true disciples, in the day of the Lord Jesus: — in the other, that they will rejoice or boast in him as a true and faithful apostle, in that day. In both cases, a permanency of Christian faithfulness and sympathy is joyfully anticipated.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;

16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again

out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I

15. *And in this confidence.* Namely, of mutual friendship and esteem. In the confidence that you regard me as an honest and faithful apostle, and that I can rejoice in you as obedient and true disciples. ¶ *I was minded.* I intended; namely, when the former epistle was written. ¶ *To come unto you before.* Before the present time. When I wrote to you, it was my intention to visit you soon, nothing doubting that you would receive me kindly. ¶ *That ye might have a second benefit.* Or, *grace*, as in the margin. Paul had resided in Corinth at least "a year and six months," Acts xviii. 11, during which time he had firmly laid the foundation of a Christian church. 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11. But, as is manifest from the former epistle, the Corinthian brethren had retained many former erroneous opinions, or imbibed new ones equally erroneous, and still indulged in unchristian practices. To reform both, and to teach them "the way of God more perfectly," was the "second benefit" which he desired to bestow. See note on Rom. i. 11. His former visit had been beneficial to them, by making them acquainted with the gospel and converting them to a general faith in it; he hoped the second might also be beneficial, by more fully instructing them in doctrine, and applying the truth more effectually to their hearts.

16. *And to pass by you into Macedonia.* That is, through Corinth. The direct route from Ephesus to Macedonia was not through Corinth, but through Troas,—the route which the apostle actually travelled. But he had intended to go out of his direct course, and visit Corinth on that journey. His intention had been frustrated by circumstances afterwards described; but he desired them to understand distinctly that such was his original purpose. ¶ *And to come again, &c.* He intended

to visit Macedonia for the purpose, among others, of obtaining contributions for "the poor saints at Jerusalem," Rom. xv. 26; to call on his way thither at Corinth, and again on his way from Macedonia to Judea. ¶ *And of you to be brought on my way.* To be accompanied and assisted through a part of my journey, according to a common custom. See note on Rom. xv. 24. ¶ *Toward Judea.* As he went thither to convey the contributions received for the benefit of the poor. See note on Rom. xv. 25.

17. *When I therefore was thus minded.* When I designed to visit you both on my journey to Macedonia and on my return. It does not distinctly appear how the Corinthians had obtained knowledge of this original purpose, as it seems to have been abandoned before the former epistle was written. 1 Cor. xvi. 5, 7. It has been suggested that Timothy, who had been desired to visit Corinth, 1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 11, might have left Ephesus before the apostle's plan was changed; and that, even if he did not reach Corinth, he might have mentioned the original design to others who did visit that city. However this be, it is manifest that such intelligence had been received; and that when they were informed by the apostle, that it was his present intention not to visit them until he had passed through Macedonia, his adversaries accused him of fickle-mindedness, and even of cowardice. See note on ver. 12. ¶ *Did I use lightness?* Did I change my plan without sufficient cause? Did I actually manifest levity or inconstancy of purpose? This interrogation is to be regarded as an absolute denial of the charge. ¶ *Do I purpose according to the flesh?* "According to carnal views, and private passions, interest, ambition, or worldly policy."—*Bloomfield.* This is also to be construed as

purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

18 But as God is true, our

an absolute denial that he had chiefly regarded his private convenience and interest, in postponing his visit. There may be an allusion here to the insinuation that his prolonged absence was occasioned by the fear of encountering his adversaries, ch. x. 7-11. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 19-21. ¶ *That with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?* Various interpretations have been given of this passage; generally agreeing, however, in one point,—that it was the apostle's design to repel the charge of inconstancy or "lightness" of mind. The following agrees well with the context, and appears as probable as any other. "His object in the whole passage, and especially in what follows, is not so much to assert his right of changing his resolution, as to assert that, although he had apparently given up his original plan, he still in fact and in spirit adhered to it; that, for the two short visits which they had lost, they would now, as is implied in 1 Cor. xvi. 7, be compensated by one long visit at the end of his whole journey. For this reason, he never directly states his change of purpose, but leaves it to be inferred from the statement of his original plan in ver. 16, combined with the fact that, at the time when he wrote the present epistle, he was on his way, not to Corinth, but Macedonia; and accordingly, in what follows, it is only the *yes*, and not the *no*, which pervades his argument. It is best, therefore, to take these words as a part of the question, the reduplication being understood only as adding strength. Am I actuated by worldly motives, in such a manner as to give way to inconsistency; that I would say *yes* at one time, and *no* at another; promise to come, and then break my promise? No; I promised to come, and I shall fulfil that promise."—Stanley.

18. *But as God is true.* A solemn asseveration, nearly if not altogether equivalent to an oath; being an appeal

word toward you was not yea and nay.

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached

to the God of truth. ¶ *Our word toward you was not yea and nay.* See note on ver. 17. By *word*, may be understood not only the promise to visit Corinth, but all his communications to his brethren, whether by preaching, by epistle, or otherwise. The following verses indicate that Paul considered his character as a preacher to be somewhat compromised by any suspicion of his personal character; and on the other hand, that a vindication of his faithfulness as a preacher sufficiently repelled the charge of personal inconstancy. Hence he appeals to the character of his teaching, ver. 19.

19. *For the Son of God, Jesus Christ.* See notes on Matt. xvi. 16; Rom. i. 4. The apostle is here understood by some, to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ personally; by others, to mean his doctrine, the gospel. ¶ *By me, and Silvanus, and Timothy.* Silvanus was the same disciple who is elsewhere styled Silas, the companion of Paul in many of his journeys; he shared imprisonment with him at Philippi, Acts xvi. 25-30, and was his associate during his first visit at Corinth, Acts xviii. 5. His name is joined with the apostle's in both the epistles to the Thessalonians. Timothy was also a cherished disciple and friend. See note on ver. 1. ¶ *Was not yea and nay.* Did not represent Jesus Christ as fickle and inconstant, if the reference be personal; or if the doctrine be intended, did not represent the gospel as a tissue of ambiguities or uncertainties, but as a system of unchangeable truth. ¶ *But in him was yea.* "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Matt. vii. 29. His testimony was uniform, and the truths which he announced were absolute. His gospel is entitled to the most unhesitating confidence; its promises are sure; the veracity of God is pledged for their fulfilment. See ver. 20. It is not unlikely that the apostle here alludes to

among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

20 For all the promises of God

the manner in which he and his associates had preached Jesus and the gospel, as well as to the intrinsic character of either. He had not preached hesitatingly or uncertainly. He had not proclaimed a doctrine at one time, and contradicted it at another. He had uniformly preached "Jesus and the resurrection," Acts xvii. 18; Jesus as the messenger of divine grace and salvation, Rom. v. 21; vi. 23; and the resurrection as the medium through which mankind are to be changed from an earthly to a heavenly state. 1 Cor. ch. xv. Jesus himself was uniformly represented as faithful even unto the end, and the gospel of grace as infallibly true, incapable of being falsified or made ineffectual even by the unbelief of men. Rom. iii. 3, 4. If Paul had never swerved from the direct line of uniformity and consistency, in preaching Christ and his gospel, through hope or fear, he could not justly be suspected of inconstancy or cowardice in matters involving less important personal consequences.

20. *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen.* "Were through his inspiration preached in one uniform manner, and as things absolutely certain. For if the Son of God was really manifested in the flesh and dwelt among us, if he wrought miracles, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and gave spiritual gifts to his disciples, there can be no doubt of the fulfilment of all the promises which he commissioned his apostles to preach to mankind in God's name. Besides, the incarnation, miracles, resurrection, and ascension, of the Son of God, being things as great and strange as the things which God hath promised to us, the greatness and strangeness of the things promised can be no impediment to our believing them. *Yea* was the word used by the Greeks for affirming anything; *amen* was the word used by the Hebrews for the same

in him *are yea*, and in him *Amen*, unto the glory of God by us.

21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;

purpose." — *Macknight*. If, then, the apostle would approve himself a faithful servant of such a master, he must observe the strictest veracity. ¶ *Unto the glory of God by us*. Either, the preaching of such promises and the absolute certainty of their fulfilment is conducive to the glory of God among men; or, the actual fulfilment of such promises will manifest the divine glory to the universe. Phil. ii. 9-11.

21. *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ*. He who makes us firm in the faith, or hath confirmed us in the hopes of the gospel, is the same who hath given us grace to be faithful and true to our promises. The apostle would not have his brethren think he arrogated to himself any undue credit for veracity. He would not even seem to be boastful or self-confident. He rather, as in 1 Cor. xv. 10, acknowledges his obligations to divine grace for preservation from inconstancy and fickle-mindedness. He adds the words "with you," apparently both to express his sympathy with his brethren, and to impress on their minds the fact that for all the Christian gifts and graces in their possession, they owed gratitude to God; for he alone had enabled them to stand fast. ¶ *And hath anointed us*. Or, consecrated us to his service; an allusion to the ancient manner of consecration, by anointing with oil. There is a verbal reference here which does not appear in the translation. The signification of the word *Christ* is *the anointed*. See note on Matt. i. 1. So that we may read, "he which stablisheth us with you in the *anointed*, and hath *anointed* us, is God." The idea is, that the Spirit which was given to the Master without measure is imparted in some degree also to his disciples, consecrating them to the service of God. ¶ *Is God*. The Father is acknowledged as the original source of all blessings communicated through the Son. Similar

22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

23 Moreover I call God for a

record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

24 Not for that we have do-

instances of the apostle's care, that while ascribing honor to the Son we should not fail to recognize the Father as the supreme object of honor and gratitude, occur in 1 Cor. iii. 23; xi. 3; xv. 24-28.

22. *Who hath also sealed us.* "Anciently seals were used for marking goods, as the property of the person who had put his seal on them, that they might be distinguished from the goods of others. Thus, all believers are said to be 'sealed with the spirit which was promised,' Eph. i. 13; iv. 30, because they were thereby marked as Christ's property. Thus, likewise, the servants of God are said to be 'sealed in their foreheads,' for the same purpose, Rev. vii. 3; ix. 4. The apostles, therefore, being sealed of God, they were thereby declared to be his servants, and the apostles of his Son, and could not be suspected either of fraud or falsehood." — *Macknight*. In like manner our Lord himself is said to have been sealed by the Father, John vi. 27. ¶ *And given us the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.* The earnest is the pledge of what is to follow; as in the ordinary transactions of life, a purchaser pays a part of the price as "earnest-money," or as a pledge that the whole price shall be paid to the vendor. The same rule holds in matters of gift as in matters of debt. The original word used here occurs only in ch. v. 5, and Eph. i. 14. The same idea, however, is expressed by "the first-fruits of the spirit," in Rom. viii. 23. See note. A somewhat different application of the *sealing* is given as follows: "As if he had said, Who has also sealed the truth of what is preached by us, by the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, vouchsafed not only to myself, but to you also upon your receiving my doctrine; 'and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts,' that is, given not only to me, but also to you on receiving my doctrine, his spirit as the earnest of eter-

nal life. The argument of the apostle appears to be, that these things being so, as the Corinthians could not but acknowledge, they afforded a sufficient evidence that he, being thus approved by God, could not possibly be such a deceitful, self-interested person as his adversaries represented him, and could not reasonably be suspected of dealing fraudulently with them in anything relating to his ministry." *Dr. Wells*, quoted by *D'Oyly & Mant*. However various the opinions expressed of particular passages in ver. 18-22, almost all commentators agree that the apostle designed that the whole should bear upon the question of his own sincerity and veracity, which had been questioned by his adversaries; and that he designed thereby to convince his brethren that he had not "used lightness," nor "purposed according to the flesh;" but that, on the contrary, he had endeavored to approve himself a sincere disciple of his Master, and a faithful servant of that God "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," Jas. i. 17, and all whose promises through his Son "are in him yea, and in him amen," to the manifestation of his own glory.

23. *Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul.* Or, against my soul; that is, if I speak falsely. This is to be regarded as a solemn appeal to God; somewhat in the character of an oath. It was justified by the emergency; for it was of the utmost importance to the apostle's influence over the church for good, that he should vindicate his character against the aspersions of his enemies. ¶ *That to spare you, &c.* Here the actual reason is assigned for his change of purpose. It was not the result of any fickleness or unsteadiness of mind, nor for his own personal convenience, as he had already declared. But he desired to spare his brethren the mortification and chagrin, the public disgrace, and the painful

minion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy : for by faith ye stand.

emotions of mind, which they must have endured, had he visited them at once and exercised those acts of discipline which their offences might seem to demand. He therefore sent to them a faithful yet affectionate epistle, exposing their faults, and beseeching them to reform; and determined to delay his visit until the effect of the epistle might be ascertained. That effect was favorable, ch. vii. 6-11. And now that he had heard how zealously they endeavored to purify themselves and the church, he frankly discloses to them the fact, that he had forborne to visit them through an affectionate regard for them, and to spare them much suffering. True, there remained at Corinth some who continued rebellious against the apostle; and these he rebukes in ch. x., xi., xii. But the reformation had been extensive; indeed it would seem to have been general; and accordingly he makes a full discovery of his motive for delaying his visit, which previously would not have been proper.

24. *Not for that we have dominion over your faith.* The apostles were doubtless authorized and qualified to pronounce what was true and what was false in regard to faith; yet they used their power with discretion. Instead of commanding men to believe the prescribed articles of faith on pain of endless damnation, they reasoned, persuaded, and exhorted. In other words, they endeavored to lead rather than to drive men to Christ and to faith in his gospel. "The sense of this passage I take to be this: The course which we have pursued has been chosen not because we wish to lord it over your faith, to control your belief, but because we desired to promote your happiness. Had the former been our object, had we wished to set up a lordship or dominion over you, we should have come to you with our apostolical authority, and in the severity of apostolic discipline. We had power to

CHAPTER II.

BUT I determined this with myself, that I would not

command obedience, and to control your faith. But we chose not to do it. Our object was to promote your highest happiness. We, therefore, chose the mildest and gentlest manner possible; we did not exercise authority in discipline; we sent an affectionate and tender letter." — *Barnes*. ¶ *But are helpers of your joy.* Our main object is to increase your joy, by strengthening your faith in the gospel, and by inducing you to yield more perfect obedience to its precepts. ¶ *For by faith ye stand.* "Archbishop Newcome has well expressed the sense thus: — I use the expression 'over your faith,' for faith causes you to stand firm in your duty and in the divine favor. Rom. xi. 20." — *Bloomfield*. With all their faults, the apostle regarded them as standing firm in the general faith of the gospel, as a divine revelation. 1 Cor. i. 4-7; xv. 1. The spirit of the whole verse has been exhibited thus: — "This forbearance is further explained to the effect that a repeated appearance in Corinth would have had a character of urgency and compulsion, and he desired not to have dominion over their faith, but only to participate in their joy, and thus leave them the opportunity of recovering themselves; they stood themselves in the faith, and could not be dealt with as unbelievers." — *Olshausen*.

CHAPTER XII.

This chapter is closely connected with the preceding, and need not have been separated by a numerical division. The apostle pursues his regular theme, and assigns an additional reason for delaying his visit; or perhaps more properly, he urges the additional consideration, that in sparing their feelings he also spared his own; because so tender was his sympathy with them, that it would have grieved his own heart to administer severe discipline. It grieved him, indeed, to write such

come again to you in heaviness.

2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me

glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?

3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I

sharp rebukes as he judged necessary in his former epistle, ver. 4. Much more "affliction and anguish" would he have suffered, had he personally encountered the offenders, and dealt with them according to their deserts, before they had reasonable space for repentance.

1. *But I determined this with myself.* I resolved. I formed this determination. ¶ *That I would not come again to you in heaviness.* Or, in sorrow. The same word occurs ver. 3. "Again" is to be construed with "come," not with heaviness. The apostle does not mean to say that his former visit was sorrowful. He labored "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," 1 Cor. ii. 3; but it does not appear that he was then grieved by the improper conduct of his disciples; they had been led astray by false teachers after his departure, and adopted principles and practices which gave him much pain. What he intended to say, and what his language implies, is, that he was not willing that his second visit to them should be under circumstances grievous both to him and them. He was not willing to visit them while they were in a condition to require severe and painful discipline, — painful to them, and painful to him through sympathy. Hence he had first written, that they might have opportunity to reflect, repent, reform, and thus enable him to rejoice in their amendment rather than mourn over their offences and punishment. In short, he determined to delay a visit which would then be painful, until, through the influence of his written admonitions and exhortations, it might conduce to the mutual joy of himself and his brethren.

2. *For if I make you sorry, &c.* This is generally understood as a hypothetical statement of the consequences which would have resulted from an earlier visit, or of the manner in which such a visit would have been attended with heaviness or sorrow. If

this be the correct interpretation, the question in the text must be regarded as equivalent to "for if I should make you sorry," or "if I had made you sorry." If, for example, I had visited you at once, and had communicated the incestuous person, 1 Cor. v. 1-5, or had administered severe discipline to other offenders, thereby occasioning sorrow both to them and to their friends, to whom could I look for comfort in my own distress, except to those whom I had made sorrowful? And how poorly would they be prepared to comfort me, while smarting under the sorrow which I had inflicted on them? Instead of that mutual rejoicing which I so much desire, there would have been mutual heaviness and lamentation. "For if I should make you sorry, by punishing your disobedient brethren, who is it that could give me joy, unless the very same who is made sorry by me? After thus making you sorry, I could not expect that pleasure from your company which I should otherwise have enjoyed. The apostle, knowing that the sincere part of the church would be made sorry by his punishing their disobedient brethren, wished not to distress his friends by punishing his enemies." — *Macknight.*

3. *And I wrote this same unto you.* Different interpretations have been given of this passage. Some suppose the apostle to refer to what is written in this second epistle, and understand him to mean that he had thus given them a second warning, so that those who were still rebellious might submit and be prepared to receive him with joy. "That, however, which has not been hitherto effected, Paul desires by the present written exhortation to effect. — The Fathers, and among the moderns, Emmerling, have correctly referred this to the epistle before us." — *Otshausen.* Others, more correctly, in my judgment, suppose the apostle to refer to his former epistle, especially to his

should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

directions to excommunicate the incestuous person, and generally to his rebukes administered to other offenders. This interpretation much better agrees with what follows in ver. 4; because however grievous was his "affliction and anguish of heart," when he wrote his first epistle, he was now abundantly comforted by the intelligence received through Titus, that so good an effect had been produced by it, ch. vii. 6-11. ¶ *Lest, when I came, &c.* Lest, if I came at once, without previous written admonition, I should feel obliged to use severity, producing mutual sorrow. ¶ *I should have sorrow from them, &c.* Lest I should have grief in the church. Lest the abuses which prevail in the church should give me sorrow. I should be grieved with the existence of these evils; and the necessary discipline required would be painful both to me and to them. Instead of rejoicing with them, as I desire, and receiving from them such comfort as I ought, the interview would be mutually unpleasant and sorrowful. ¶ *Having confidence in you all, &c.* This is a general expression which must be understood with some limitation. Paul knew he had enemies in Corinth, who bitterly opposed him, and whose conversion into friends he had little reason to expect when he wrote his first epistle. He knew that even now they were alienated from him, and were striving to destroy his influence in the church, ch. x. 10, 11; xi. 12-15. But he speaks thus of the general character of the church and their regard for him. This they had manifested, by the readiness with which they reformed the abuses which he had condemned, and "approved themselves to be clear in that matter," ch. vii. 11. He had a right, therefore, to believe that now there was a *general* sympathy between him and the church, and that they rejoiced in his joy, as he in theirs. In this confidence he had

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love

written; and he had not been disappointed.

4 *For out of much affliction and anguish of heart.* Very possibly the false teachers had represented him as harsh and unfeeling, destitute not only of Christian charity, but of ordinary human affection. This charge he repudiates. He declares that he wrote, not in anger, but in sorrow. Their offences grieved him, and he bitterly regretted the necessity of administering reproofs. ¶ *I wrote unto you with many tears.* The disorders and contentions, the false doctrines and immoral practices, which had become prevalent at Corinth, deeply moved the affectionate heart of the apostle; and he wept, even as his Master wept over the rebellious Jews, while he foretold the punishment of their iniquities. Luke xix. 41-44. ¶ *Not that ye should be grieved.* It was not his principal object, to make his brethren sad and unhappy. He desired rather to benefit them by inducing them to turn away from their transgressions. But this could only be done by causing them first to realize the enormity of their offences, so that they should "sorrow after a godly sort," even unto repentance, ch. vii. 8-11. And his love for them constrained him to cause this grief, in hope of the benefit which might result. Grief was the means, not the end; it was incidental to the desired good, not the principal object designed. God "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. iii. 33. That is, he doth not afflict merely for the sake of afflicting, nor because he delights in human misery, in itself considered; but he administers chastisement for the sake of the beneficial effect which it will produce in those who are exercised thereby. Heb. xii. 9-11. Such chastisement is an evidence of divine love, not of wrath, because it is designed for the production of holiness and happiness. Such also

which I have more abundantly unto you.

5 But if any have caused grief,

was the apostle's design, and the spirit which actuated him. He sought the good of his brethren; and in order to accomplish it, he subjected them temporarily to sorrow and grief; yet so deep was his sympathy, that notwithstanding he hoped for the best results, his reproofs were administered "with many tears." ¶ *But that ye might know the love, &c.* He dealt faithfully with them, because he loved them, and because he desired them to know that he loved them. True love is manifested in warning a brother of approaching danger; in admonishing him of his errors in doctrine or practice; in reproving, rebuking, and exhorting, with all long-suffering and doctrine. 2 Tim. iv. 2. If this be done in a Christian spirit, the offender will be constrained to acknowledge the love which prompts the performance of such a painful duty.

5. *But if any have caused grief.* If any one; that is, any man. Paul here states hypothetically what was actually true; and thus manifests a tender regard to the feelings of others. The reference doubtless is to the incestuous person spoken of in 1 Cor. v. 1-5. It is observable that this person is nowhere called by name; so that the individual was not only restored, upon repentance, ver. 7, but also escaped perpetual infamy. A similar concealment of name occurs in John viii. 3. This man had grieved the apostle, by bringing public disgrace upon the holy cause to which his life was devoted. ¶ *He hath not grieved me, but in part, &c.* This passage has been variously interpreted. Some suppose the apostle to mean, he hath not grieved me alone, but others also; hath not so much grieved me personally, as his brethren in the church, by this scandal. "He has not particularly offended or grieved me. He has grieved me only in common with others, and as a part of the church of Christ. All have common cause of grief; and I have no interest in it which is not common to you all." — *Barnes.* But this interpretation

he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

does not well harmonize with the obvious import of the subsequent clause. Others, therefore, give a different translation to the words rendered *in part*, and understand the apostle to mean that, while the mere fact of the offence had been grievous to him, others also, namely, the abettors of the transgressor, had been involved in the rebuke, and grieved by it. The whole verse has been paraphrased thus: — "Now if the incestuous person hath grieved me, by persuading so many to countenance him, he hath not grieved me, except by misleading a part of you. This I mention, that I may not lay a load of accusation on you all indiscriminately, as having encouraged him in his crimes." — *Macknight.* And still better, thus: — "As concerns him who has caused the pain, it is not me that he has pained, but some of you; (some, I say,) that I may not press too harshly upon all. — With regard to the sentiment, St. Paul intends to say that *not all* the Corinthian church had been included in his former censure, but only *that part of it* which had supported the offender; and therefore the pain which the offender had drawn down on the church was not inflicted on the whole church, but only on that erring part of it." — *Conybeare.*

6. *Sufficient to such a man is this punishment.* Namely, to the incestuous person, as in ver. 5. The *punishment* was probably excommunication, as that was what the apostle recommended, or rather directed, 1 Cor. v. 3-5. Some have supposed that excommunication had been deferred, and some milder discipline used, which was pronounced *sufficient* by the apostle. It is more probable, however, that his direction had been literally observed, since the church was so anxious "to be clear in this matter," ch. vii. 11. ¶ *Which was inflicted of many.* By many; that is, by the church, in accordance with the direction he had given. "The apostle gave a remarkable proof of that love which, in ver. 4, he had expressed towards the Corinthians. For,

6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many.

7 So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one

should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him.

9 For to this end also did I

first, he made a distinction between the guilty and the innocent, ver. 5; next, he forgave the incestuous person, who it appears had repented of his crimes, ver. 6; in the third place, he ordered the church likewise to forgive him, and confirm their love to him, that he might not be swallowed up by excessive grief, ver. 7."—*Mac-knight*. We have here an illustration of the manner in which punishment and forgiveness harmoniously operate together. The offender was *sufficiently* punished, and afterwards forgiven. Some have vainly imagined that forgiveness necessarily implies remission of punishment, and that if men are justly punished they cannot be forgiven. Such was not Paul's opinion. He directed the punishment. After its infliction, he forgave the offender, and exhorted the church to do likewise. See note on Matt. vi. 12.

7. *So that contrariwise*. On the contrary. On the other hand. That is, having manifested your disapproval, by administering sufficient punishment, you have another duty to perform, requiring the manifestation of a spirit of compassion and sympathy. ¶ *Ye ought rather to forgive him*. Rather than continue the punishment, which has already been sufficient, and which has produced reformation, you should restore the offender to favor, reinstate him in his former position, and remember his sin no more to his disadvantage. Let his excommunication be removed, and let him be received again as a member of the church. ¶ *And comfort him*. Let him feel that he has your love and sympathy. "Paul tells them that they ought to comfort him. They should receive him kindly, as God receives to his favor a penitent sinner. They should not cast out his name as evil; they should not reproach him for his sins; they should not harrow up his recollection of the offence

by often referring to it; they should be willing to bury it in lasting forgetfulness, and treat him now as a brother."—*Barnes*. Such is the only forgiveness by which men can truly comfort their offending and penitent brethren. Anything short of this leaves a sting of bitterness in the heart. ¶ *Lest perhaps such a one*. Another circumlocution is used, to avoid mentioning the offender's name, so anxious was the apostle that lasting infamy should not attach to the individual. ¶ *Should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*. Should be utterly discouraged and overwhelmed with grief, and thus rendered incapable of personal enjoyment or of usefulness to the church. The idea manifestly is, that the continuance of punishment, after its proper object is accomplished, is productive of more evil than good. Hence the Lord declares by his prophet, "I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; for the Spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." Isa. lvii. 16. The apostle admonishes his brethren to copy this divine example, and for the same reason.

8. *Wherefore*. In view of the evil which would result from the continuance of punishment. ¶ *I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him*. Let it be permanent; and let it be manifested by unmistakable signs. The reference is probably to some public act of restoration to full fellowship.

9. *For to this end also, did I write, that I might know*. This was one object, doubtless; but the apostle does not say it was the *only* one. "It is a hyperbolical expression of his gratitude to them, as though his object had not been (what, however, it chiefly was) the reformation of the offender, but the trial of their obedience. Compare ch. vii. 12, and 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10."—

write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I

Stanley. His whole design had been accomplished. The offender had been sufficiently punished; the honor and purity of the church had been vindicated; and in this manner the church had given joy to the apostle by being "obedient in all things." See ch. vii. 11.

10. *To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also.* Although the expression is general, the reference is especially to the offender before named. Paul had exercised his apostolical power of *binding*, 1 Cor. v. 3-5; and he here uses the same power of *loosing*. He gives his sanction and exhortation to the removal of the punishment, and the restoration of the offender to full favor. ¶ *For if I forgave any thing, &c.* The forgiveness which I heartily extend, flows not alone from my sympathy for the penitent brother, whose offences have incurred punishment, but also from my regard for you, and my desire to promote the welfare of the church. ¶ *In the person of Christ.* "In the name and by the authority of Christ, whereby I required you to punish him for his offence." — *Macknight.* The idea is, that he both condemned and forgave, not merely as an individual, but in his official capacity as an apostle of Jesus Christ, bound to exemplify his Master's spirit in an open testimony against sin, and in a tender, forgiving disposition towards sinners.

11. *Lest Satan.* "This is a mere Hebrew word, and signifies an adversary, an enemy, an accuser." — *Crudden.* It is applied to human beings, as in Matt. xvi. 23, and to adverse, inimical, influences. Evil is personified under this name, as also under the name of *devil*. See note on Matt. iv. 1; Rom. -xvi. 20. It here refers to influences adverse to the prosperity of the church; either the open opposition of its enemies, or perhaps more probably the false doctrines and principles

forgave *it*, for your sakes *for-gave I it* in the person of Christ;

11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

12 Furthermore, when I came

of its professed friends. ¶ *Should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.* What precise *advantage* is here referred to does not distinctly appear. The general idea is, that a persistence in punishment would endanger the permanent loss of the penitent brother from the church. By a manifestation of love and forgiveness, he would be comforted, encouraged, and reassured; he would be animated to devote himself anew and entirely to Christ and his church; but a cold, unforgiving temper would discourage him and drive him to despair. Others would represent the church as selfish, harsh, and cruel; and thus create a natural hostility to it in the minds of unbelievers. "The apostle seems to give a caution against the principles which the Novatians afterwards espoused, who, on pretence of establishing discipline, and preserving the purity of the church, would not receive into their communion those who had apostatized in times of persecution, however penitent they might be afterwards; a rule which anciently occasioned much confusion, and even bloodshed, in the church." — *Macknight.* Harshness always repels; love only attracts.

12. *Furthermore.* "After the digression thus occasioned by the protest against the false insinuations grounded on his delay, he resumes the main subject of this portion of the epistle, namely, the arrival of Titus with the good news from Corinth, which had filled his mind at its opening." — *Stanley.* From this subject he had been diverted, in order to state the true cause of his delaying to visit Corinth; and this reference to his desire to "spare" them the pain which severe apostolical discipline would have occasioned, led him further to commend the ready obedience of the church in punishing the offender, and this again

to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

to exhort them to extend forgiveness to the offending brother. He now returns to a relation of circumstances exhibiting his affection for them, and his deep interest in their welfare. The digression is characteristic of Paul's style of writing. ¶ *When I came to Troas.* A city of Phrygia. See note on Acts xvi. 8. ¶ *To preach Christ's gospel.* This was his great work, in every city which he visited. He does not state the reason which induced him to select this city in particular. ¶ *And a door was opened unto me of the Lord.* The Lord granted me a favorable opportunity. There was good prospect of success. The people were well disposed. See note on 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

13. *I had no rest in my spirit, because, &c.* I was disappointed, and anxious in mind. Paul expected to meet Titus at Troas, and to ascertain from him the result of the former epistle. And such was his anxiety in that regard, that he could not quietly remain there, but felt constrained to depart for Macedonia, where he hoped to meet Titus, and to have all his doubts dispelled. ¶ *I went from thence into Macedonia.* See note on Acts xvi. 9. This visit to Macedonia is supposed to be that which is briefly mentioned in Acts xx. 1, 2. It would seem from ver. 14, and still more clearly from ch. vii. 5, 6, that Titus arrived at Macedonia soon after Paul; and the intelligence which he brought filled the apostle's heart with joy.

14. *Now thanks be unto God, &c.* A special subject for thanksgiving was the arrival of Titus, with such comforting news from Corinth. With this the apostle seems to connect in his mind the general success which had attended his ministry. And for all these blessings he acknowledges his obligation to the Giver of all good,

14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them

and devoutly offers thanks to him. ¶ *Which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.* Whether in spreading the gospel where it has never before been heard, or in confirming the faith of disciples by additional instructions, or in correcting the errors and reforming the disorders and sinful practices existing in any particular church, — in all cases, God had blessed his labors and enabled him to triumph over all opposition. Very probably what was uppermost in his mind, was the success which had attended his former letter, and the evidence which he had received that the great body of the Corinthian church remained true and faithful to him, notwithstanding the efforts of false teachers to undermine his authority and to alienate from him the hearts of his brethren. *To triumph in Christ,* is to triumph in his cause, and through his assistance. See Matt. xxviii. 20; Phil. iv. 13. ¶ *And maketh manifest the savour, &c.* The scent or fragrance. Makes known or diffuses abroad the truths of the gospel, like the odor of incense. "The idea of a Roman triumphal procession, in the eyes of the then existing world, the most glorious spectacle which the imagination could conceive, and in its general features familiar even to those who had never witnessed it, seems to suggest the thought of the fragrant odors, whether from the altars smoking with incense in the open temples, or from the sacrifices offered up on the arrival of the procession at the temple of the Capitoline Jupiter. As applied to the knowledge of God revealed through his preaching, this thought expresses the invigorating and quickening effect of the new element of life, Christianity permeating the world as a cloud of frankincense." — Stanley.

15. *For we are unto God, &c.* In

that are saved, and in them that perish:

16 To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and

the sight of God we are accepted, as Christ's sweet savor, if we faithfully preach his gospel. Such is the usual interpretation. But *Bloomfield* suggests a different meaning:—"It seems better, with the ancients and some eminent moderns, as *Schleusner*, to interpret *by God*. The general sense is, We are those through whom God spreads and propagates this odoriferous, beneficial, and salutiferous gospel of Christ." ¶ *In them that are saved, and in them that perish*. See note on 1 Cor. i. 18. Whether in regard to believers or to unbelievers, whether in regard to those whose hearts have been purified by faith, Acts xv. 9, or to those who remain "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," Acts viii. 23, the gospel which we preach is a savor of Christ, producing different immediate effects, indeed, upon the different classes, yet retaining its own unvarying character. The unbelief of men does not change the character of God's truth. Rom. iii. 3. Or, if the usual interpretation be preferred, the faithful minister of the gospel is approved by God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. If he perform his duty faithfully, his service is accepted, whether men lay hold on the gospel by a spirit of faith, or whether they reject it with indifference or with contempt.

16. *To the one*. Namely, to unbelievers. ¶ *Death unto death*. Their guilt is aggravated by rejecting the gospel. They sink even more deeply in that death in trespasses and sins, from which it is the design of the gospel to quicken them through faith. ¶ *To the other*. To believers. ¶ *Life unto life*. The means of life. The quickening power by which they are saved. Eph. ii. 1. For the effects resulting from faith and unbelief, see notes on Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 18, 36. The idea embraced in this and the preceding verse is, that the gospel is a manifestation of divine grace in

to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

17 For we are not as many,

Christ, or that its faithful preachers are acceptable to God, whatever may be its immediate results; that it quickens believers to newness of life, while it aggravates the guilt of unbelievers, inasmuch as they reject the proffered grace of God. Their offence is made to abound by the means, which, rightly improved, would remove it. See note on Rom. v. 20. "The *saved*, as the Greek commentators explain, simply denotes those who believe and embrace the gospel, and who, by faithfully fulfilling its requisitions, are saved; *them that perish*, those who either disbelieve and reject it, or at least neglect to fulfil its requisitions."—*Bloomfield*. "To some we are the means of life; while we increase the guilt of others, who continue incorrigible under our reproof."—*Gilpin*. "By the expression 'in them that are saved and in them that perish,' Paul by no means intends to designate two unalterable classes of mankind, but only to describe the result produced by the one or other influence of the gospel."—*Olshausen*. In short, the description applies to a state of things on earth, and has no reference to the condition of men in the future life. ¶ *And who is sufficient for these things?* When the apostle considered the vast responsibility of his office, how much of human weal or woe depended on the proper performance of its duties, how some might be attracted to the gospel by a prudent, affectionate address, and a "godly conversation," or repelled from it by harshness and coldness, and an evil example, he was constrained to confess that mere human strength was not sufficient to meet the emergency. Yet he did not despair; for in ch. iii. 5, he intimates that divine grace had granted him "sufficiency," and conferred the ability necessary to the performance of his work.

17. *For we are not as many*. Connected with the oppressive idea of responsibility, the idea of the disparage-

which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

ment of himself by the false teachers seems to have flashed across the apostle's mind. Hence in this verse, and in ch. iii. 1, he impliedly contrasts their character with his own, and exhibits his superior ability, as well as authority, to execute the work of an apostle acceptably to God. ¶ *Which corrupt the word of God.* "Adulterating the word of God." — *Haweis.* Mixing with divine truth either Jewish traditions or heathen philosophy. Such adulterations commenced early in the church, and have been the source of most of the corruptions which have disfigured Christianity. ¶ *But as of sincerity.* Sincerely. Without admixture of deceit or dishonesty. See note on ch. i. 12. ¶ *But as of God.* As conscious of responsibility to God, speaking in his name, and acting under his direction. ¶ *In the sight of God.* Knowing that our designs, purposes, and secret thoughts, are manifest in his sight. ¶ *Speak we in Christ.* We preach the gospel of Christ, pure and unadulterated, as becometh those who have been called by him to the ministry.

It may be observed, that having returned to the subject of his journey and of his anxiety to hear from Corinth, ver. 12, 13, Paul was led into another digression by the idea of a triumph, in ver. 14, and proceeded to describe the influence of the gospel under figures drawn from triumphal processions; and from this he was further led to other subjects, by a natural association of ideas, until at last he returns to the former subject in ch. vii. 5. So entirely was his mind devoted to the theme of the gospel, that it was difficult to pursue a personal narration without frequent digressions to this all-absorbing theme.

CHAPTER III.

The division of chapters here interrupts the sense, where no change of

CHAPTER III.

DO we begin again to commend ourselves? or need

subject was designed. The connection between the two is very intimate.

1. *Do we begin again to commend ourselves?* In ch. ii. 14, Paul had thanked God for granting him a "triumph" over opposition; and in ch. ii. 17, had contrasted his own "sincerity" with the dishonesty of false teachers who "corrupted the word of God." He now anticipates an objection likely to be urged by his adversaries, that he was unduly commending himself, and boasting of his own faithfulness and success, as a means to secure the favorable regards of the Corinthians. The implied answer is, that he commended himself no farther than was fully justified by the circumstances of the case. ¶ *Need we, as some others, epistles, &c.* It is supposed that the false teachers, especially the Judaizing portion of them, were introduced at Corinth by commendatory letters from Judæa. From this class of teachers Paul encountered constant opposition. See note on Acts xv. 1. Letters of recommendation were in common use among both Jews and Greeks. This question substantially disavows the necessity of such letters in his own case, and conveys a delicate reproof to those who relied entirely on this kind of testimony to their fitness for office. ¶ *Or letters of commendation from you.* Namely, to other churches. It is implied that Paul needed no such authentication of his apostleship, either to them, or from them. "It would appear that, as one of the objections to the apostleship of St. Paul, was the fact that he produced nothing of the kind, but came on his own authority." — *Stanley.* In what follows, he shows that his authority rested on better evidence than mere commendatory letters.

2. *Ye are our epistle.* Pursuing the idea of "epistles of commendation," the apostle declares that the visible success of his ministry is the only epistle which he needs, and refers to the Corinthians themselves as "the

we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you?

2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men :

3 *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle*

seal of his apostleship." 1 Cor. ix. 2. Their conversion, under his faithful instructions, was better evidence to them of his qualifications for the gospel ministry than any letters from others could furnish. See John iv. 39-42. ¶ *Written in our hearts.* Their conversion was an assurance to himself that he had not mistaken his calling, but that Christ had actually commissioned him as an apostle; it was a divine testimony to his own heart, both of his fidelity and of his triumph. ¶ *Known and read of all men.* The epistle, so to speak, was not only imprinted upon his heart, but was visible and legible to others. "The letter of commendation which I have to give is no other than yourselves, a letter written on my heart, bound up with my inmost affections; but a letter, also, plain and open to all the world, with no secret meaning or double dealing, — known as widely as your faith and love is known; a letter, therefore, which commends me with far greater authority than any outward testimonials; for it is a letter written not by man but by Christ, not with perishable but imperishable materials." — *Stanley.*

3. *Manifestly declared to be the epistle, &c.* Their conversion was an event well and widely known Corinth, as a great mart of trade, was frequented by vast numbers from different nations, so that it might be said of the church there, as of that at Rome, their "faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Rom. i. 8. The work of grace on their hearts was manifest to all dwellers at Corinth, as well visitors as inhabitants. They had therefore become a living epistle of Christ, or an open manifestation of the purifying influence of his gospel. ¶ *Ministered by us.* Through our instrumen-

of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.

4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward :

5 Not that we are sufficient

tality. Paul had been commissioned to make the gospel known to them, to unfold its promises, and to apply and enforce its precepts. ¶ *Written not with ink, &c.* Pursuing the same metaphor the apostle declares that this living epistle was not written with fading characters on perishable substances, but impressed by the Spirit of God on the heart itself. "As Moses was a minister of the law, so are we ministers of your faith in the gospel. As he wrote on tables of stone, so we upon your hearts. The law was written with ink, but the gospel was written in you by the Spirit. By as much as the Spirit is superior to ink, and the heart to stone, by so much does the new dispensation excel the old." — *Theophylact.* Such appears to be the general idea running through the whole verse. The epistle was manifest and permanent; of higher authority and more convincing than any letters of commendation written by man. ¶ *But with the Spirit of the living God.* Men are often employed as instruments for communicating the truth, and enforcing it; but conversion is produced by the Spirit of the living God. One may plant, and another water; but God alone giveth the increase. 1 Cor. iii. 6. This great truth the apostle repeatedly asserts, ascribing both present and final salvation from sin to God, that no man should boast, Eph. ii. 8, 9; but that all should confide in him who is both able and willing to bestow salvation in due time. 1 Tim. ii. 4; iv. 10. ¶ *Not in tables of stone.* A reference to the Jewish law, a portion of which was inscribed on stone tablets. ¶ *But in fleshly tables of the heart.* Impressed on the heart by the influence of the Spirit. See Jer. xxxi. 33; Heb. viii. 10-12. What is thus written is permanent.

of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

4. *And such trust have we, &c.* Such evidence is afforded by your conversion, and by the conversion of others through the influence of the gospel as preached by me, that I have a confident trust in God that I am a faithful and accepted servant of Christ. This living epistle affords me stronger assurance than any commendatory letters from whatever source.

5. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, &c.* "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." — *Hawcis.* I have no such sufficiency as would justify me in thinking highly of myself. A different, and perhaps better translation, is given by others: — "Not because we are fit of ourselves to reason anything as from ourselves; but our fitness is from God." Paraphrased thus: — "Not because I am fit of myself to find out by reasoning anything effectual for convincing unbelievers, as from myself; but my fitness to convert mankind is from God." — *Macknight.* "Not thinking myself sufficient to gain wisdom by my own reasonings, as if it came from myself, but drawing my sufficiency from God." — *Conybeare.* It may be observed that the word here rendered *to think* is very variously translated. It occurs often in the epistle to the Romans, and is there rendered *account, impute, reckon, esteem, conclude, think*; elsewhere it is translated *reason, number, suppose*; and in 2 Tim. iv. 16, "that it *may not be laid* to their charge." See note on Rom. iv. 3. Whichever way the word be translated, the main idea is evident. The apostle disavows reliance on his own unaided powers, and confesses that his success should be attributed to God, through whose assistance he has been enabled to triumph over opposition, and to be instrumental in the glorious work accomplished in Corinth. This disavowal was characteristic of Paul, who never arrogated to himself more than was his own, but constantly acknowledged his depend-

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spir-

ence on God for assistance. See 1 Cor. xv. 10. Moreover, the disavowal is emphatic here, because he would not afford his adversaries the slightest ground to accuse him of boasting, or of self-confidence.

6. *Who hath also made us able ministers, &c.* This is not said boastfully, but humbly. It is a grateful acknowledgment that his appointment to the work of the ministry, and his qualifications, ability, or sufficiency therefor, were freely bestowed by God. Thus, and thus only, does he claim to have been made "sufficient for these things," ch. ii. 16, and to have attained "trust" towards God, ver. 4. ¶ *Of the new testament.* Or covenant; *new*, in contrast with the Jewish law, as is evident from what follows. See note on Matt. xxvi. 28. ¶ *Not of the letter, but of the Spirit.* Not a mere literal observance of fixed rules, but conformity to the Spirit which underlies those rules. See note on Rom. vii. 6, where this distinction is illustrated. ¶ *For the letter killeth.* The mere letter of the Jewish law denounced death as the penalty of disobedience, giving no promise of pardon. It prescribed certain fixed rules, which none succeeded in obeying, and all became guilty before God. Rom. iii. 19. Beyond this the letter of the law did not extend. ¶ *But the Spirit giveth life.* The Spirit, underlying the Mosaic law, is a Spirit of life, as is illustrated in Matt. xxii. 36-40. Specific laws exist in the letter; but the Spirit on which they are founded is love, both to God and man; and this is a Spirit of life. Moreover, if God be worthy of love, he may be trusted for forgiveness; and if men be worthy of love, God may be expected to reclaim and forgive them. Such conclusions may justly be drawn from the Spirit of the law, though not from the letter. The apostle, however, is generally understood here to contrast the Law and the Gospel, rather than a literal and spiritual interpretation of the Law. "The apostle is drawing a parallel which has no connection with

it: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

7 But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that

interpretation, but is between the Law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ. The former *kills*, inasmuch as it denounces death without hope on all who disobey it; nay, sometimes *occasioned* death, by the multiplicity and difficulty of its ceremonial rites. See Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 19. On the contrary, the spiritual system of the Gospel (1) brings life and immortality to light, and affords the means of salvation; (2) it imparts life, a new life, by the Holy Spirit. — The two dispensations, moreover, are contrasted as to their *tendency*; that of the Law was punishment; that of the Gospel reformation rather than punishment, salvation rather than condemnation." — *Bishop Marsh*, quoted by *Bloomfield*.

7. *But if the ministration of death, &c.* If the ministration of the Mosaic covenant, which brought death, not life, ver. 6. By the ministration may be understood the preaching or teaching of the law, by those who were duly authorized. But the apostle is generally understood to refer to the personal ministry of Moses, through whom the Law was given to men. ¶ *Written and engraven in stones.* The ten commandments were so written. Ex. xxxi. 18; xxxii. 15, 16, 19; xxxiv. 29–35. ¶ *Was glorious.* "Was done with glory." — *Macknight*. "If a glory was shed upon the ministration of the law of death." — *Conybeare*. "Came into existence in glory." — *Stanley*. "Was attended with magnificence and splendor. The glory here referred to consisted in the circumstance of sublimity and grandeur in which the law of Moses was given." — *Barnes*. Not only were thunderings, lightnings, and fire, the visible emblems of the divine presence in the mountain, when the Law was given, but even Moses himself, through whom it was given, was distinguished by a glorious halo, or an unnaturally resplendent countenance. ¶ *So that the children of Israel, &c.*

the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away;

See Ex. xxxiv. 29, 30, where this circumstance is fully described. ¶ *Which glory was to be done away.* Nothing is found in the original answering to the word *glory*. Some suppose this word was properly inserted, and that the meaning is, that the glory of Moses' face, the unnatural brightness, was temporary and soon faded away. Others suppose the reference to be to the old covenant itself, which had now waxed old, and was to be wholly "done away" or superseded by the new spiritual covenant, the "new testament," ver. 6. Others include both ideas. "Which shining was soon to be abolished, as a prefiguration of the abolition of the covenant of the letter." — *Macknight*. The apostle represents the Law as glorious, and then declares that, "glorious as it was, it had no glory that could be compared with the Gospel; and that even the glory it had was a glory that was to be *done away*; to be absorbed, as the light of the stars, planets, and moon, are absorbed in the splendor of the sun." — *Clarke*.

8. *How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?* "How far more glorious must the ministration of the Spirit be?" — *Conybeare*. Ministration of life would be the natural contrast to "ministration of death," ver. 7. But the apostle prefers to speak directly of the life-giving Spirit. See John vi. 63. There is an ellipsis both in this verse and in verse 7: ministration of the covenant of death, or of the letter which killeth, on the one hand, and ministration of the covenant of life, or of the Spirit which giveth life, on the other, make the actual contrast elliptically represented. The new covenant far exceeded the old in glory. See ver. 11. But the apostle seems here rather to speak of the relative glory attached to the promulgation of the two covenants. If God distinguished his servant Moses by manifestations of glory, much more

8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

9 For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of

righteousness exceed in glory.

10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

his beloved Son, especially by demonstrating him to be "the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. i. 4; Eph. i. 20-23. And if the successors of Moses were engaged in a glorious work, much more glorious and honorable was the work assigned to the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ministers of his gospel. A similar contrast is found in Heb. iii. 1-6; vii. 17-22; viii. 1-6.

9. *For if the ministration of condemnation, &c.* "The apostle here, as Theophylact says, 'gives another turn to the same thought.' Indeed, the ministration of condemnation is meant further to illustrate what was said at ver. 7, the ministration of death. The condemnatory Law and the justificatory Gospel are contrasted; the former as a ministry of condemnation, the latter as one of justification; conferring justification on all who heartily embrace it."—*Bloomfield*. Just so far as the new covenant excelled the old in glory, in this respect, just so much more glorious was the ministration or promulgation of the one than of the other. ¶ *Ministration of righteousness.* Of the covenant of righteousness. Of the covenant designed to save men from their sins and to make them righteous,—the only salvation which can be of permanent benefit to mankind. See note on Rom. i. 17.

10. *For even that which was made glorious, &c.* The contrast in this verse and the next is more directly between the two covenants, without special reference to the ministration of either. "In this particular instance was fulfilled the general rule that a greater glory throws a lesser glory into the shade."—*Stanley*. "The apostle in the preceding verses having compared the glory of the ministry, and of the ministers of the two covenants, with each other, goes on to consider the

glory or excellence of the covenants themselves; and to show that the covenant of the Spirit is more excellent than the covenant of the letter, he observes that the covenant of the letter, which was glorified by the shining of Moses' face, was not much glorified in that respect, when compared with the more excellent glory of the covenant of the Spirit; because the vanishing of the glory on Moses' face showed that the covenant of the letter, of which he was the minister, was to be abrogated; whereas the continuance of the glory of inspiration with the apostles to the end of their lives showed that the covenant of the Spirit, of which they were the ministers, was always to remain. These observations concerning the glory or excellence of the gospel above the law, the apostle made, to convince the Corinthians how ill-founded the boasting of the false teacher was, who assumed to himself great honor on account of his knowledge of the law of Moses, and who erroneously enjoined obedience to the law, as necessary to salvation."—*Macknight*. For a further contrast between the two covenants, see note on ver. 17. It is manifest from ch. xi. 22, that, at the date of this epistle, the prominent opposers of Paul at Corinth were the Judaizing Christians; a class, it may be observed, who gave him more trouble, and threw more impediments in his path, than the whole Gentile world together. They could never excuse him for preaching that God is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. Hence "it is not surprising that their image should be constantly before him, and that, in repelling their charges, his sense of the greatness of his mission should be enhanced by a consciousness of its superiority to the ancient and decaying system to which they were still enslaved."—*Stanley*.

11 For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

11. *For if that which is done away.* The law with all its splendor is represented as already *done away*, or abolished, being superseded by the more glorious dispensation of the gospel. The abrogation of the law is often urged by this apostle as a fact already accomplished in regard to all believers. See Gal. ch. iii., iv. ¶ *Was glorious.* Was attended with glory. ¶ *How much more that which remaineth is glorious.* That which continueth, which is permanent, excels in glory. "The apostle's meaning is, that the excellence of the gospel above the law is demonstrated by its putting an end to the law by its superior splendor, and by its remaining without being superseded by any subsequent dispensation." — *Macknight.* In ver. 6, 7, 8, Paul describes the law as a ministration of death, or a covenant which killeth; but the gospel as a ministration of the life-giving Spirit, or a covenant of life. He argues this question at large in his epistle to the Romans. See notes on Rom. iii. 19-31. The same fact is recognized in Gal. iii. 21-25. Mere law can never communicate spiritual life. It may restrain the ungodly from gross offences, through fear of the penalty; and in this it is serviceable, for it is better that men should be restrained by fear than not at all; but it has no life-giving power. The law was also inferior to the gospel, because, whatever the principles on which it was founded, and whatever the spirit of its requirements, its letter affected only the outward conduct. It prescribed certain rites and ceremonies, commanded certain acts and forbade others. A man might yield a punctilious obedience to the letter, and yet be destitute of true godliness, nay, corrupt and abominable in heart. See Matt. xxiii. 23-33; Luke xviii. 9-14. But the gospel appeals to the heart, to the inmost thoughts and affections. It is not written on stones, but on the heart. Heb. viii. 6-13. It requires purity of heart, and through the influence of the Spirit it purifies and

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech :

makes holy. Again, the gospel excels the law in glory, because it gives promise of final deliverance from sin, and the free bestowment of immortal life, and holiness, and happiness, concerning which the law is silent. Life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel. 2 Tim. i. 10. The law denounced death, without promise of deliverance into spiritual life; but the gospel reveals that divine grace which abounds even to the bestowment of righteousness and eternal life. Rom. v. 20, 21. And here it is declared, that although the law is abrogated, being insufficient (see note on Rom. viii. 3), the gospel which supersedes it shall be of perpetual duration, always active, and always efficacious.

12. *Seeing then that we have such hope.* "Some eminent commentators explain, 'having such confidence in the glorious perpetuity of the gospel ministration.' But this seems too confined a sense. It is better, with Chrysostom, Newcome, and Macknight, to regard it as having reference to all that has been said of the superiority of the gospel over the Law; as if he had said, 'Having such an assured hope as this, so grounded on the infinite superiority and pre-eminent advantages of the Gospel over the Law (and, by implication, of the same superiority of his ministry over that under the Law), I use,' &c." — *Bloomfield.* This phrase is a substantial repetition of the idea in ver. 4. He had interrupted his discourse, in order to point out the surpassing glory of that "new testament" of which God had made him an able minister. And by the vision of glory thus opened to the mind, his "trust" or confidence, in ver. 4, is here changed into "hope," an emotion combining both desire and expectation. He desired the consummation promised in the gospel, because it embraced the highest glory of God and the highest happiness of mankind; he expected it, because he knew that "he is faithful that promised." Heb. x. 23. He knew that divine grace

13 And not as Moses, *which* put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not

was adequate to the performance of the work; and therefore his hope was confident and steadfast. ¶ *We use great plainness of speech.* Some understand the apostle to mean that he was bold and decided in his enunciation of the truth; that he was not timid, nor fearful to avow his opinions. And he might well be thus bold, to speak the truth in God's name, relying on him for support and protection. But the succeeding context rather indicates a different interpretation; namely, that he declared the truth clearly, distinctly, and intelligently, without concealment, equivocation, or obscurity. It would seem that some of his adversaries had accused him of insincerity; see note on ch. i. 13; which charge he not only repels, but impliedly hurls back against them, ch. ii. 17. And, notwithstanding all his digressions, it is manifest that this subject was still in his mind, and his efforts were directed to remove all doubts as to his sincerity and the literal truth of the doctrines which he communicated. He is here led into another digression, comparing the darkness and obscurity of the law with the clearness and light of the gospel. The imagery drawn from the descent of Moses from the mount, with the law, is continued; but instead of a contrast between the letter inscribed on stones and the impressions of the living Spirit on the "fleshy tables of the heart," he here exhibits a contrast between the veiled face of Moses and his own unveiled face, indicative of the clearness and directness of his preaching. He resumes the subject without metaphor, in ch. iv. 1, 2, in language similar to the text.

13. *And not as Moses.* I do not conceal anything. I am open and direct, in proclaiming the truth. ¶ *Which put a vail over his face.* See Ex. xxxiv. 33. The precise reason why he did so is not stated. In the original account, it is intimated that one reason was, that the Jews were fearful to gaze on such brightness;

steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

14 But their minds were blind-

and in this aspect of the case it is cited by the apostle in ver. 7. But he here refers to it in a different aspect, as if the concealment of his face was emblematical of the comparative obscurity of the law. "Here the apostle insinuates that Moses put a vail on his face while he delivered the law, to show the darkness of the types and figures of the law, of which he was the minister. And as he veiled his face, that the children of Israel might not see the vanishing of the glory from his face, it signified that the abrogation of the law, typified by the vanishing of the glory, would be hidden from them. So the apostle hath interpreted these emblems, ver. 14. Further, to show that the gospel is a clear dispensation, and that it is never to be abolished, and that the ministers of the covenant of the Spirit were able at all times to speak plainly concerning it, they did not, while ministering that covenant, veil their faces like Moses." — *Macknight.* However this be, the apostle certainly seems to refer to the vail as an emblem of obscurity. ¶ *Could not steadfastly look.* Could not gaze intently. Could not behold with a steady eye. The idea is, they could not clearly discern. ¶ *To the end of that which is abolished.* To the ultimate purpose or design of that covenant which is now abolished, its purpose having been accomplished. Paul says, "The law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Gal. iii. 24. It served to show men that they could not deliver themselves from sinfulness, by their own exertions; that they could not attain perfection in the sight of God, by the deeds of the law. See notes on Rom. iii. 19, 20. Under various types and shadows, it pointed to a future dispensation, in which divine grace, through Jesus Christ, should accomplish the work of renovating, purifying, and saving mankind from sin. See notes on Rom. iii. 21, 22. This work being accomplished, the purpose of the law was completed, and

ed: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *veil* is done away in Christ.

it was to pass away; for "after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Gal. iii. 25. But this purpose was not distinctly declared in the law; and this obscurity was typified by the veil over Moses' face. The people were not able to perceive distinctly the ultimate design of this "old testament" or covenant now abolished.

14. *But their minds were blinded.* The metaphor is here somewhat changed; the inability to see distinctly being attributed to an obtuseness of vision on the part of the people; and the object not distinctly seen is the Law itself, instead of the face of Moses, its minister. The word here rendered *blinded* properly signifies to *harden* and figuratively to render dull, stupid, unable to perceive readily or distinctly. See note on Rom. xi. 7, where the same word occurs in a similar sense. See also ch. iv. 4. ¶ *For until this day remaineth the same veil, &c.* Even until the time of writing, the Jews remained ignorant of the true purpose of the "old testament," or Mosaic covenant. "The thought of the veil which prevented the people from recognizing the perishable character of the glory of Moses throws him back on the thought that this veil still continues on their hearts, so as to prevent their recognition of the perishable character of the Law, which was not only represented in the person of Moses, but derived from him its usual title." — Stanley. ¶ *In the reading of the old testament.* So soon after the introduction of the gospel, the Mosaic covenant is called *old*; a striking proof of the apostle's firm conviction that it was abrogated. See Heb. viii. 13. "When the Israelites read Moses' account of the covenant of the law, a veil lieth on that covenant. Its types, and figures, and prophecies, are as dark to them as ever; it not being discovered to them, that they are all fulfilled in Christ; and conse-

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheless, when it shall

quently that the old covenant itself is abolished by him." — Macknight. The phrase *old testament*, however, is generally understood to be here used (and here only) as we now use it, to denote all the writings which the Jews regarded as the Bible. They were as *blind* to the true meaning of the Prophecies as to that of the writings of Moses himself. ¶ *Which veil is done away in Christ.* Some understand the meaning to be, that by the appearance of Christ, the veil was done away; that is, that the darkness and obscurity of the "old testament" was removed. But there is no Greek word in the text answering to *veil*. And many suppose that the Law itself, instead of the veil, is intended. "Nor can they see beyond it, that the law is done away in Christ." — Conybear. "The fact not being to them unveiled, that the old covenant is done away in Christ." — Stanley.

15. *When Moses is read.* The old covenant, called by the name of Moses, as in Luke xvi. 29; Acts xv. 21. ¶ *The veil is upon their heart.* This is substantially a repetition of ver. 14, in a somewhat more intense form. "Besides the natural obscurity of the old covenant, there is a second veil, formed by their own prejudices and lusts, which blind them to such a degree, that they cannot discern the intimations which God, in the law itself, hath given of his intention to abolish it by Christ." — Macknight. What was true of the Jews in that day remains equally true now; they are yet blinded.

16. *Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord.* The use of the singular form here, instead of the plural, has been the occasion of much perplexity to commentators. Some have supposed the reference is to Moses, ver. 15, as the representative of the Jewish people. But Moses, in that place does not denote an individual, either personally or as a representative, but the Pentateuch, or the Jewish sacred books

turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit :

generally. Others fix on Israel, ver. 13, as the more remote antecedent. And this interpretation probably embraces the true idea. But we need not seek so far for it. In ver. 15, it is said that "the veil is upon their heart," that is, the heart of the people of Israel. Retaining the singular form, the apostle here says that "when it shall turn," that is, when the heart of the Jewish people shall turn. It is here distinctly intimated that the Israelites shall be converted to God. When the object designed by their temporary blindness shall be fully accomplished, they shall *turn*, and perceive the truth of the gospel, "and so all Israel shall be saved." This subject is fully discussed in Rom. ch. xi. ¶ *The veil shall be taken away.* They shall perceive the truth now concealed under types and shadows; they shall discern the genuine meaning of what is now obscure to them. They shall thus come unto the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. 1 Tim. ii. 4.

17. Now the Lord is that Spirit. "Now, that ye may understand what I mean by the Jews turning to the Lord, the Lord signifies the covenant of the Spirit of which we are the ministers, ver. 6." — *Macknight*. "As Archbishop Newcome suggests, the apostle here takes up *the Lord* of the preceding verse, and enlarges on it, showing the advantages of the gospel over the law. The sense may, with Professor Scholefield, be thus expressed: 'The Lord of whom I speak, see ver. 16, is the Spirit;' or, as Professor Dobree admirably paraphrases, 'When I speak of the Jews turning to the Lord, I mean their turning from the letter to the Spirit.' So Archbishop Newcome and Archbishop Middleton well render, 'The Lord and his doctrine is, that is, imparts, the spiritual and life-giving religion,' mentioned above, ver. 6, or, 'the Lord Jesus is the leading object as well as author of that spiritual dispensation.'" — *Bloomfield*. As the "old testament," ver. 14, the "ministration of death," ver.

and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with open face

7, is called Moses, ver. 15, because given through his ministry, so the new covenant, "the new ministration of the Spirit," ver. 8, is here styled Christ, or the Lord, because revealed through his ministry, and because his own gracious Spirit is manifested in it. ¶ *There is liberty.* "Where the Spirit of the Lord abides, bondage gives place to freedom." — *Conybeare*. It is generally supposed that the apostle has special reference to freedom of speech, as in ver. 12, which is his general theme; freedom and plainness of speech, clearness and distinctness in the presentation of truth, in opposition to the obscurity which rested on the old dispensation. "Under the influence of that Spirit, therefore, Paul says that he was able to speak with openness and boldness; that he had a clear view of truth, which the mass of the Jews had not; and that the system of religion which he preached was open, plain, and clear. The word *freedom* would perhaps better convey the idea. There is freedom from the dark and obscure views of the Jews; freedom from their prejudices and their superstitions; freedom from the slavery and bondage of sin; the freedom of the children of God, who have clear views of him as their Father and Redeemer, and who are enabled to express those views openly and boldly to the world." — *Barnes*.

18. We have here the completion of the contrast commenced in ver. 13, but interrupted by the remarks in the intervening verses suggested by the word *veil*. When Moses presented the law, he veiled his face; not so the ministers of the gospel. ¶ *But we all.* All the apostles and teachers; or, as many say, all believers in the gospel. ¶ *With open face.* Literally, with unveiled face, in contrast with the veiled face of Moses. ¶ *Beholding as in a glass.* Or, in a mirror. See note on 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Some understand the idea to be, that the "glory of the Lord" is reflected from the gospel. "Christians, by looking on the gospel

beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

could see the glorious perfections and plans of God as bright, and clear, and brilliant, as they could see a light reflected from the burnished surface of the mirror."—*Barnes*. Others translate and interpret differently. "Reflecting as mirrors the glory of the Lord."—*Macknight*. "With open countenances, as mirrors, reflecting the glory of the Lord."—*Locke*. "Reflecting as in a mirror."—*Stanley*. And the idea conveyed by this metaphor is supposed to be, "that Christians having, like Moses, received in their lives the reflected glory of the divine presence, as Moses received it on his countenance, are unlike Moses in that they have no fear, such as his, of its vanishing away, but are confident of its continuing to shine in them with increasing lustre; and in this confidence present themselves without veil or disguise, inviting inquiry instead of deprecating it, with nothing to hold back or conceal from the eager gaze of the most suspicious or the most curious."—*Stanley*. This interpretation better harmonizes with ver. 12, which the contrast, in ver. 13, 18, is designed to illustrate. ¶ *Are changed into the same image*. Are transfigured, or transformed. See Matt. xvii. 2; Rom. xii. 2; where the same word occurs. Literally, metamorphosed. We become more and more like the image which we reflect; or, like the image which we behold, if the other translation be preferred. See note on Rom. viii. 29. See also I John iii. 2, where a similar expression occurs. ¶ *From glory to glory*. A Hebraism, denoting a continual succession or a completeness of glory. See Ps. lxxxiv. 7. The transformation is wholly glorious, from beginning to end. ¶ *Even as by the Spirit of the Lord*. The purifying process is wrought by the divine Spirit in the human heart. This sentiment is recognized throughout the New Testament, and by no one of the sacred

CHAPTER IV.

THEFORE, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

writers more frequently and distinctly than by Paul. The contrast, in ver. 13, 18, is well summed up thus:—"The meaning of this passage, stripped of the metaphor, is, We apostles, the ministers of the covenant of the Spirit, do not impart to the world a veiled or dark knowledge of the covenant, as Moses gave the Israelites an obscure knowledge of the covenant of the letter. But we all, having a complete knowledge of the covenant of the Spirit, by inspiration from Christ, preach it everywhere in the plainest manner. So that, in diffusing the knowledge of God and religion through the world, we are the images or representatives of Christ, by the power of an abiding inspiration from him who is the Lord, or author, of the covenant of the Spirit."—*Macknight*. Without vouching for the accuracy of all the details, I have no doubt that the general idea here expressed is correct. Thus interpreted, the contrast is a fitting illustration of the assertion in ver. 12; having "such hope, we use great plainness of speech."

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter the apostle returns to the subject which he had twice before introduced, in ch. iii. 4, 12; but what had formerly increased from "trust" to "hope," has now become so sustaining in its nature, that he says "we faint not." All these expressions have relation to the question in ch. ii. 16, "Who is sufficient for these things?" He scarcely recommences, however, before a fresh recollection, as it would seem, of the charge of insincerity to which the whole of ch. iii. is partly designed as a reply, induces him to repel that charge once more, before dismissing it entirely. Hence ver. 2-6 are closely connected with the subject of ch. iii. The subject of the first verse is resumed at

2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ;

but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

ver. 7, and continued without material interruption to ch. v. 10.

1. *Therefore* Because the gospel is so plain, and easy to be understood; because it requires no concealment; because it rests on such a firm basis; because it is so purifying in its nature; because its effects are so sanctifying to all who receive it heartily. ¶ *Seeing we have this ministry.* Namely, the ministry of the gospel, the ministration of the "Spirit," and of "righteousness," ch. iii. 8, 9. The idea is, since I am an apostle of Jesus Christ. ¶ *As we have received mercy.* Paul uniformly acknowledged his appointment to apostleship as an act of surpassing mercy. He retained through life a vivid recollection of his early and violent opposition to Christianity, and accounted it a special manifestation of grace, that he should have been arrested in his mad career, and made "a minister and a witness" on behalf of him whom he had persecuted. Acts xxvi. 15, 16; 1 Tim. i. 12, 13. ¶ *We faint not.* I am ready to endure all trials, and to encounter any opposition. I know that he whose mercy has committed this ministry to my charge will grant me strength to perform my duty. Aided by his power, I shall neither falter nor faint. This idea is amplified in ver. 7-18, where the same subject is resumed.

2. *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty.* Some have supposed that a reference is here made to certain licentious practices at Corinth. But the more general and probably more correct opinion is, that the words are to be taken in their natural and literal signification. "In the consciousness of such an office, derived from God's grace alone and not from his own worthiness, Paul assures them that no difficulties have power to weary him (here indirectly rebuking the state of affairs in Corinth), that he has employed no deceitful arts to evade them, that by the power of truth he

commends himself to God and men. These thoughts point back to ch. iii. 1; ii. 17; in which the mixture of divine truth with human wisdom by his opponents was reproved." — *Olshausen.* By renouncing dishonesty, Paul does not mean that he had formerly been guilty of it; but only that he abjured and abhorred it. Indeed, he was peculiarly conspicuous for openness and a straightforward performance of what he regarded to be his duty, while he was yet an unbeliever. Acts xxii. 3-5; xxvi. 9-11; Gal. i. 13, 14. Equally bold and decided was he in his testimony to the truth after his conversion. He scorned to conceal or falsify the truth. He gloried in the gospel, because it did not require concealment or falsification. ¶ *Not walking in craftiness.* He used no cunning artifices to allure followers, or to avoid opposition. While he cheerfully denied himself the enjoyment of Christian liberty in indifferent matters, out of respect to the prejudices or weak faith of others, in essential matters he would not bate one inch; and he went forward openly, not craftily, in the execution of his purposes. He was never guilty of a trick or a mean stratagem, even for the accomplishment of a worthy purpose. ¶ *Nor handling the word of God deceitfully.* See ch. ii. 17. Not disguising the truth; not wresting the word of God from its true meaning; not attempting to increase or diminish its true force; not adulterating it with Jewish traditions or with Grecian Philosophy; not abusing it in any manner for unworthy purposes. The language contains an implied rebuke of what was probably practised by the false teachers at Corinth. ¶ *But by manifestation of the truth.* By a plain and open exhibition of the truth. By presenting the truth in such a clear light, that it may be easily perceived and understood. ¶ *Commending ourselves to every man's conscience.* "Acting so as to recom-

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds

of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

mend ourselves to the unbiassed good opinion of men." — *Bloomfield*. Speaking the truth with such openness and distinctness, that men shall be constrained to admit the sincerity of my belief, and my honesty of purpose in preaching, even though they fail to embrace the truth as a revelation from God, ver. 3, 4. The apostle's object here is to repel the charge of personal insincerity. ¶ *In the sight of God*. As in the presence of God. I use no means to gain general credence, except such as I am conscious are open to the inspection of God, and such as I believe he approves.

3. *But if our gospel be hid*. Here, as generally in this epistle, Paul uses the plural form, while speaking of himself. He speaks of "my gospel," as in Rom. xvi. 25, because it is the gospel which he preached, and of which he was the chief apostle to the Gentiles. Although so reasonable in itself, and so distinctly announced by him, there were some who did not understand and believe it. The reason is assigned in ver. 4. *Hid, or veiled*, as it is in the Greek, is an image taken from the previous remarks concerning the veil. It was as if a veil were between their hearts and the gospel, so that they could not discern its glory. ¶ *It is hid to them that are lost*. Not to them who shall be endlessly lost or destroyed in the future life, but to them who are even now already lost. See note on ch. ii. 15, 16. "It is impossible, indeed, that any one should resist the force of this pure and rational belief, unless his understanding were first led away by the wickedness of the world." — *Gilpin*. "Nor can what I have preached and written to you be denied to be the sincere gospel faith, except by such sensual and profligate men, whose affections are so wedded to their temporal ends and advantages, that they have no relish of the wise and glorious purposes of the religion of Jesus Christ, the Son

of God, the image of the Father, and the revealer of his true and last will to mankind." — *Pyle*. "If the gospel preached by us be yet obscure, it is so only among obdurate, obstinate unbelievers." — *Hammond*. *The saved* is a common appellation of believers, in the New Testament. *The lost* is the proper contrast, to designate unbelievers. Unbelief, under such circumstances, involves the idea of obstinacy; as the light was presented, to which they were wilfully blind. See note on John iii. 18.

4. *In whom*. In respect to whom; or among whom. ¶ *The god of this world hath blinded, &c.* A personification of evil principles. Thus our Lord speaks of the "prince of this world." See note on John xii. 31. Though there be many "called gods," to us, there is one God only. 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. The Ruler of the universe acknowledges no rival, nor a divided empire. "Some, and particularly the ancient fathers, have read the verse, 'But God hath blinded the minds of the unbelievers of this world,' &c. Irenæus, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Photius, Theophylact, and Augustine, all plead for the above meaning; and Augustine says that it was the opinion of almost all the ancients." — *Clarke*. These ancient Greek fathers may be safely regarded as competent judges whether the text, being written in their own language, is susceptible of this meaning. Whether this interpretation be adopted, or, with the great majority of moderns, rejected, one fact may be regarded as certain: namely, that the *blindness* did not happen, in opposition to the will of God, but was, in a certain sense, the result of his own act. If they were blinded by their own lusts and passions, as the immediate cause, it is none the less true that it was a part of his plan, and in accordance with his most holy purpose. See notes on Rom. xi. 7. "The rest were blinded." We may be unable to fathom the de-

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and

ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

signs of God, or to assign the precise reasons for his acts. But what he reveals, it becomes us to accept and believe without hesitation; and it requires less stretch of faith to believe that the affairs of the universe are administered by him alone, than to believe that he has a great antagonist who is perpetually deranging and counteracting his plans, in spite of all his exertions to the contrary. ¶ *Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.* The metaphor taken from the brightness of Moses' face, concealed by a veil, is still retained. The hearts of unbelievers were veiled, lest the light should shine into them. See Rom. xi. 8-10. ¶ *Who is the image of God.* As the character of Christ is reflected in his gospel, so is the character of God reflected in his son Jesus Christ. Heb. i. 3. The same idea is repeated in verse 6. The gospel, therefore, if embraced, enlightens the heart, and communicates a knowledge of the divine character. A somewhat different application of the figure is made thus:—"Paul in this passage calls Christ the image of God, who is the Father of lights, or Fountain of all the knowledge that is in the world, for the same reason that he calls the Apostles the images of Christ. Christ faithfully delivered to the world all the doctrines which God gave to him, as the apostles faithfully declared all the revelations which Christ made to them. According to St. Paul, therefore, the world is illuminated by the apostles with a light which they have derived from Christ; and Christ, as mediator, hath derived his light from God, and thus, all the spiritual light that is in the world, the apostle ultimately refers to God. See verse 6."—*Macknight.* The idea, pervading the whole verse, is, that if unbelievers failed to embrace the gospel, the obstacle was not in the gospel, nor in its preachers, but in their own hearts.

5. *For we preach not ourselves.* I do not profess to be the author of the gospel, or the Redeemer of the world. I do not preach for the purpose of ad-

vancing my own interest, or of inducing you to regard me more highly than I deserve. "The words, as Theophylact said, have reference to the preceding ver. 3, 4; being in some measure parenthetical; 'we do not act in a crafty manner, or adulterate the word of God, because we do not preach ourselves, as do the false teachers.' We do not speak as principals, as if in a business of our own; we merely act as ambassadors on the part of another, namely, Jesus Christ."—*Bloomfield.* When men take more pains to display their skill in rhetoric or the graces of oratory, than to unfold the truths of the gospel; when they seek personal honor and applause, rather than the spiritual benefit of their hearers; when they claim to cherish a stronger desire for the salvation of men than God has manifested, and profess to labor earnestly to save men from the wrath of their heavenly Father; it would be profitable for them to consider seriously whether they thus preach Christ Jesus the Lord, or whether they merely preach themselves. ¶ *But Christ Jesus the Lord.* Christ and his cross; Jesus and him crucified; the Son, whom the Father freely gave to die for us while we were yet sinners; the mediator between God and man, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time; Jesus and the resurrection to immortality; the heavenly man, into whose image men shall be changed in the resurrection; such was the theme of Paul's preaching. He did not offensively thrust himself between his theme and his hearers. His speech and his preaching "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power." 1 Cor. iii. 4. He taught not obscurely, but used "great plainness of speech." Ch. iii. 12. ¶ *And ourselves your servants, &c.* Not attempting to obtain power over you, like the false teachers, nor to make merchandise of you, but acknowledging myself under obligation to labor for your good. As God has committed to me the work of pro-

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowl-

claiming the gospel to the world, I hold myself indebted to all my brethren, until my work is fully accomplished. See note on Rom. i. 14. Paul was a servant to his brethren, not only in the general sense in which all are bound to promote the welfare of each other, but specially because God had committed to him "the ministry of reconciliation." Ch. v. 18-20.

6. *For God, who commanded, &c.* In this verse, still retaining the metaphor, the apostle offers a substantial reason why he preached Christ, and not himself. By divine grace he had obtained such a vivid knowledge of Christ's character, that he desired by all means to communicate it. The gospel which he preached was not devised by himself, nor by any other man; neither did he receive it by the teaching of man, "but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. i. 11, 12. What he had thus received he did not claim as his own, but proclaimed it as the doctrine of Christ. ¶ *Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness.* An allusion to one of the most sublime passages ever written in any language: "God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Gen. i. 3. This metaphor is frequently used in reference to Christ. The prophet speaks of him as the "sun of righteousness." Mal. iv. 2. The evangelical prophet, as he is sometimes styled, speaks thus, in the name of the Lord: "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Isa. xlix. 6. See Luke ii. 32. ¶ *Hath shined into our hearts.* Namely, through the medium of his Son, "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3, of which we have a distinct intimation in this verse. ¶ *To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.* To reveal the true

edge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excel-

character and designs of God: for in these consists his essential glory. ¶ *In the face of Jesus Christ.* The divine character was exhibited in Christ, and the divine purposes were revealed by him; and thus he became the image of God. "If, then, we would know the moral character of God, we have only to look on the face of Jesus Christ, and then lift our thoughts and hearts to the infinite original. If Christ was merciful to man, then God is infinitely merciful. If Christ was forgiving to the penitent, and had no difficulty in reconciling his personal holiness with the throeb of mercy, then God is infinitely compassionate, and his tenderness to the penitent is one form of his moral perfection. If there was no unforgiveness in Christ, there can be no unforgiveness in God: for the image must be faithful to the divine original. Whatever moral feature, then, you find in Christ, ascribe it to God with an infinite fulness; and whatever moral feature you do not find in Christ, ascribe it not to God at all."—*Thom.* Such was the treasure committed to the apostle, for the benefit of mankind: a knowledge of the divine character and purposes, as manifested and revealed by Jesus Christ.

7. *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.* Namely, the knowledge mentioned in ver. 6. The metaphor here used is supposed to be founded on an ancient practice of hiding in the ground valuable treasures of money or precious stones, enclosed in earthen vessels. The idea is, that the apostle, and other ministers of Christ, to whom had been committed the choice treasure of the gospel, were weak and frail in themselves; that their own strength was wholly inadequate to the greatness of their task; that they were continually dependent on God for aid; and that the glory of success belonged to him, and not to them. ¶ *That the excellency of the power.* The exceeding great power; literally, the hyperbole

lency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 *We are troubled on every*

side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not for-

of power. This may denote the power with which the apostle was clothed, pertaining to his office, or, more probably, "the mightiness of the things effected, whether miracles or the scarcely less preternatural work of conversion effected with such strikingly insufficient means."—*Bloomfield*. ¶ *May be of God, and not of us*. Paul was not of the number who say, "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom." Isa. x. 13. But, in all his labors, he acknowledged the upholding and assisting grace of God. 1 Cor. xv. 10. And he here intimates that God committed the ministry of the gospel to such feeble instruments, that its results might manifestly appear to have been wrought by divine power. See 1 Cor. i. 26-29. "In enlarging on the greatness of his task, the point from which he had started in ch. ii. 16, he naturally and insensibly passes to the support which he thence derived in the difficulties which he experienced in carrying it on. 'We faint not' is the key of this passage, on which he had already touched in ver. 1, and to which he returns again, as the conclusion of the whole, in ver. 16, first dwelling at length on the greatness of the trials which would, but for this hope, have caused him to be faint-hearted."—*Stanley*. In all his trials God sustained him, and enabled him to speak openly, plainly, and decidedly, and manifested his power, by granting abundant success to the labors of his servant, ch. ii. 14.

8 *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed*. The various translations of this passage may assist in ascertaining its meaning. "We are troubled on every side, yet we are not without shift."—*Tyndale*. "We are pressed on every side, yet not straitened."—*Macknight*. "We are afflicted on every side, yet not reduced to extremities."—*Haweis*. "I am hard pressed, yet not crushed."—*Conybeare*. "Pressed for room, but still having room."—*Stanley*. The idea is, that he was

hard pressed by trials and persecutions, yet not entirely overborne and helpless. He was not utterly overcome, for he still had resources, through reliance on divine aid; and under the full pressure of opposition, he could still continue to prosecute his labors. ¶ *Perplexed, but not in despair*. "In poverty, but not utterly without somewhat."—*Tyndale*. "Under difficulties, yet not in despair."—*Haweis*. "Helpless, yet not hopeless."—*Conybeare*. Conscious of my own helplessness, yet relying confidently on God for aid and direction.

9. *Persecuted, but not forsaken*. "Persecuted, yet not abandoned."—*Haweis*. "Pursued, but not utterly forsaken."—*Macknight*. Here the meaning of these terms "which in later Greek had come to mean merely *persecuted* and *forsaken*, is brought out according to their original signification: Pursued in our flight or race, but not left behind as a prey to our pursuers."—*Stanley*. This metaphor, like the others, is supposed to be drawn from military affairs. Though pursued from city to city by his adversaries, the apostle had never been utterly abandoned to their fury. God had always protected him hitherto, and granted him a way of escape. ¶ *Cast down, but not destroyed*. "We are cast down, nevertheless we perish not."—*Tyndale*. "We faint, but always revive."—*Gilpin*. "Thrown down, but not killed."—*Macknight*. "Struck down, yet not perishing."—*Stanley*. Although prostrated by the enemy, yet not deprived of life. I am ready to recommence the combat, and to meet whatever trials and persecutions may yet await me, trusting in that God who has preserved me hitherto. "Paul appends to this representation of the glory of spiritual life a description of the outward weakness in which it was displayed in his person. The intention of this contrast is to show that all is to be ascribed to God, and nothing to men, as already stated in ch. iii. 5.

saken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

For, throughout the apostle's sorrows and necessities, as in those of all believers, the protecting power of God displays itself; they can only humble him, divest him of all trust in his own strength, but are never allowed to corrupt or destroy him." — *Olshausen*.

10. *Always bearing about in the body the dying, &c.* A similar expression occurs in Gal. vi. 17: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." See also Col. i. 24. His body bore the marks of such persecution as his Master had suffered, indicating that a similar death awaited him. Such persecution as he describes in ch. xi. 24, 25, had doubtless left visible traces on his body. "It does not mean that he bore about him literally the dying of the Lord Jesus, but that he was exposed to a similar death, and had marks on his person which showed that he was always exposed to the same violent death." — *Barnes*. ¶ *That the life of Jesus might, &c.* Among the various interpretations given of this passage, the following appears as probable as any: — The words "suggest a reason why they were permitted to suffer all this; namely, that the faith of Christians in the resurrection of Jesus might be confirmed; that is, in order that the life of Jesus, ascended into heaven, might be made manifest by their perishing bodies so wonderfully preserved amidst deadly perils." — *Bloomfield*. "It being a certain demonstration that Christ is risen, and still lives, that we, who persuade others to believe this, are enabled to do such mighty wonders in his name, and patiently and constantly to suffer such fiery trials by his grace." — *Whitby*. "Their deliverance from danger and death, and their spiritual power and life, was to be a proof to the world that Christ was still living." — *Stanley*.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

11. *For we which live.* Although, under the plural form, Paul generally speaks of himself particularly, yet he sometimes appears to include the other apostles with himself. Such may be his meaning here. If so, it must be remembered that the apostle James, and perhaps others, had already suffered martyrdom. Acts xii. 2. ¶ *Are always delivered, &c.* Continually exposed to death. ¶ *Mortal flesh.* Equivalent to "body" in ver. 10. This verse is very similar to the preceding, differing chiefly in this: — that in the former he speaks of himself alone, while in this he seems to declare that the same facts are true in regard to his fellow-apostles. "Probably the apostle's enemies affirmed that the evils which he and the rest suffered for preaching the resurrection of Jesus afforded proof that Jesus was not risen; because if he were alive, and possessed the power they ascribed to him, he would have defended them from all evil. In answer, Paul told them that the life of Jesus since his resurrection was proved by these evils, seeing he preserved his servants from being killed by their persecutors. This the apostle had said before, ver. 10. But he repeated it here, to make the Corinthians the more sensible that a dead impostor could not preserve his disciples in such perilous situations." — *Macknight*. The following verse renders this interpretation probable.

12. *So then death worketh in us.* We are exposed to death, ver. 10, 11, and to trials and persecutions which betoken death, ver. 8, 9, though we have thus far been wonderfully preserved. ¶ *But life in you.* Your faith in the gospel, and your spiritual life, the life which you "live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20, you first received through my instrumentality, 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11; and it is

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore

confirmed by the manifestation of divine power through my trials. What I suffer in the cause of Christ is serviceable to you, as it furnishes you additional evidence that the gospel which I have preached is the word of truth. Many commentators agree in this interpretation, supposing physical death and spiritual life to be contrasted, though some suppose the latter term to include both physical and spiritual life. A similar contrast occurs in 1 Thess. v. 10. "Insomuch that, while we are in peril of life for Christ, ye are not only preserved alive (in being exempted from persecution), but made partakers of spiritual and eternal life (by our ministry)." — *Bloomfield*. I doubt, however, whether the apostle included the preservation of physical life, through freedom from persecution, in the advantage derived by his brethren from his ministry. He has said nothing of it previously; and the connection between the one and the other is not obvious. But the connection between his ministry and their faith and consequent spiritual life is apparent, and is frequently asserted by the apostle. Hence, in my judgment, the following interpretation is more correct: "So that death verily worketh strongly in us, he attacks us in various forms, but spiritual life worketh in you, by the afflictions we sustain for the strengthening of your faith." — *Macknight*. "Paul desires to express the sentiment that his lowly, suffering course of life is a source of life to the Corinthians, not merely as a conjecture, but as a lively conviction imparted from above." — *Olshausen*. "So, then, death working in me, works life in you. That is, the mortal peril to which St. Paul exposed himself was the instrument of bringing spiritual life to his converts." — *Conybeare*. The following remarks on ver. 8-15 are not unworthy of consideration: "It is remarkable that in this passage St. Paul, speaking of the persecution and sufferings he endured for the sake of

have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

14 Knowing that he which

his children in the faith, uses the very same sort of language which, when used by the same apostle in reference to Christ, a speculative orthodoxy interprets into the doctrines of atonement and vicarious death. He was continually delivered up to death, that a divine life might be communicated to them; all his sufferings were for their sakes; and death worketh in him, that life might work in them; he was willing to meet affliction and death, if he could only thereby accomplish his mission, and impregnate them with Christian life, knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus would raise up him also, and present him together with those whom he had begotten in Christ. Then, at least, would his trust in the truth, and the love in which he administered it, be justified by God." — *Thom*.

13. *We having the same spirit of faith.* Having the same faith and confidence which the Psalmist had; whose language is immediately quoted. Spirit of faith is equivalent to confident or steadfast faith. See note on Luke xiii. 11. ¶ *According as it is written.* The language here quoted is found in Ps. cxvi. 10, and was uttered under similar circumstances. David had been supported under grievous trials, and expressed his confidence in God. Paul adopts the language, as suited to his condition, but uses it to express more than was originally denoted. ¶ *We also believe.* Firmly believing in Jesus and his resurrection, in the gospel of salvation and the resurrection of all men to immortality, I have not hesitated, nor do I hesitate, to preach that gospel openly and plainly, at all hazards, and in the face of all opposition. Such is the meaning of the passage, which best harmonizes with the context.

14. *Knowing, &c.* Having the most confident assurance, not only that Christ is risen from the dead, but that the same God who raised him will raise me also, and all men, and make us

raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving

partakers of immortality. This was not a matter of mere conjecture with the apostle; he had received knowledge of it by "revelation of Jesus Christ," Gal. i. 12, and he knew that "he is faithful that promised." Heb. x. 23. He speaks of his faith as equivalent to absolute knowledge. And this faith sustained him in all trials. ¶ *And shall present us with you.* "And shall call me into his presence together with you." — *Conybeare*. The general idea is, I have the utmost confidence, I know indeed, that we shall all be raised from the dead.

15. *For all things are for your sakes.* This passage is somewhat obscure, and has been variously interpreted. Some suppose it to be equivalent to 1 Cor. iii. 22. But the context requires us rather to understand by "all things" the various trials and sufferings detailed in ver. 8–12. And in this interpretation many judicious commentators agree. "For all my sufferings are for your sakes." — *Macknight*. "For it is for your good that we preach and suffer all this." — *Hammond*. "My sufferings, therefore, in the cause of religion, respect two great ends: your good, and the glory of God." — *Gilpin*. "For all my sufferings are on your behalf." — *Conybeare*. ¶ *That the abundant grace, &c.* The overflowing grace. "The apostle in addition expresses the opinion that all things in him and with him were for them, that is, first for the Corinthians, and then for all his disciples, in order that thus, through their union in fellowship of love, they might render abundant thanksgiving to the glory of God for the grace bestowed upon them through the intercession of many." — *Olshausen*. "The next words advert to the purpose, or result, of those sufferings; namely, in order that the abundant favor of God, displayed in his preservation, might, through the

of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

thanksgiving of many persons, redound to the glory of God." — *Bloomfield*. See note on ch. i. 11, where similar language occurs.

16. *For which cause we faint not.* The apostle here returns to the declaration with which the chapter commences, and again asserts his determination to bear his afflictions manfully, and to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," 2 Tim. ii. 3; being sustained by the grace of God, cheered by a sure and certain hope of the resurrection, and animated by the belief that his patient continuance in suffering would conduce not only to his own spiritual benefit, but to the good of his brethren and to the glory of God. "These words may be paraphrased, from the ancient commentators, as follows: Wherefore, although we suffer evils and encounter perils of various kinds, yet, knowing the power of God, and feeling assured that as he hath delivered us now, he will continue to deliver us, and finally raise us up at the last day, we faint not, nor despair under our sufferings." — *Bloomfield*. It is observable that the apostle expresses his intention to persevere, not in order to secure the divine favor and the resurrection to immortality, but because he has confidence in God's love, and fully believes, *knows*, as he emphatically says, that God will raise mankind from the dead. And his views of the resurrection were such that it was to him a subject of hope, not of fear. Acts xxiii. 6; xxiv. 15. ¶ *But though our outward man perish.* Though the body is enfeebled, wearing away, in a perishing condition, destined and approaching to death. ¶ *Yet the inward man is renewed.* The spirit or soul is renovated and invigorated; namely, by the influence of the spirit, through faith in Christ. Thus, while Paul suffered, as indicated in ver. 8–12, yet was he not disheartened; he

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

fainted not, because his firm faith in a resurrection to immortality, and a final deliverance from all afflictions, animated and cheered him. He had already received "the first-fruits of the spirit," and was therefore full of confidence and courage. See note on Rom. viii. 23. ¶ *Day by day.* Continually. "The contrast here drawn between the outward and the inner man, though illustrated by the contrast in Rom. vii. 22, between the 'law of the members' and 'the inner man,' and in Eph. iv. 22, and Col. iii. 9, between 'the old man' and 'the new man,' is not precisely the same. Those contrasts relate to the difference between the sensual and the moral nature, 'the flesh' and 'the spirit;' this, to the difference between the material and the spiritual nature, the body and the soul." — Stanley.

17. *For our light affliction.* Though his trials and afflictions were severe and grievous, in themselves considered, yet in comparison with the glory which should follow, he regarded them as light. See note on Rom. viii. 18, where the same idea is expressed. ¶ *Which is but for a moment.* Momentary, in comparison with the endless duration of the future life and its unspeakable blessings. ¶ *Worketh for us.* The endurance of present affliction prepares us for the more full appreciation and enjoyment of future blessedness. We enjoy blessings the more sensibly, by first feeling the need of them. We should not fully enjoy food, without previous hunger; nor drink, without previous thirst; nor happiness, without previous pain. And whatever may be true of other orders of created beings, it is not probable that *men* could fully enjoy holiness, without previous sinfulness; nor immortality, without previous mortality. In this sense, present afflictions prepare us for subsequent glory, and conduce to its enjoyment.

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things

Moreover, through affliction, we the more fully realize the value of our present hope of future blessedness. And the apostle here speaks of the effect produced on himself by the contemplation of such glory. It revived his drooping heart, animated him to encounter all trials and afflictions, and enabled him to trust confidently in God. ¶ *A far more exceeding.* A Hebraism, expressing the utmost superlative. Literally, hyperbole unto hyperbole; equivalent to infinitely exceeding. Infinitely exceeding our present powers of comprehension. See 1 Cor. ii. 9. ¶ *Eternal weight of glory.* Endless, in contrast with temporary affliction; weight of glory in contrast with light affliction. The reference is unquestionably to the blessedness of the future life.

18. *While we look, &c.* "These words are explanatory of the foregoing, and meant to show how it comes to pass that the afflictions seem light. Now that is not only because they are temporary, but because we consider them as things of temporary interest only, compared with those of an eternal existence." — Bloomfield. ¶ *The things which are seen.* Things pertaining to the present life; such as the afflictions of which he had spoken. ¶ *The things which are not seen.* The indescribable glory of the future life. ¶ *The things which are seen are temporal.* "This refers particularly to the things which they suffered. But it is as true of all things here below." — Barnes. ¶ *The things which are not seen are eternal.* The glory of the future life has no end. "This quality implies, not only that the joys of heaven will have no end, — but also that these joys will suffer no interruption nor abatement whatever, in the course of a duration absolutely eternal." — Macknight. Looking at the subject in this light, the apostle fainted not, ver. 16. He was ready to perform his duty at all

which are not seen *are* eternal.

CHAPTER V.

FOR we know that, if our earthly house of *this* taber-

hazards, looking beyond present afflictions, and even the destruction of his present life, to the blessings to be bestowed in the resurrection. Acts xx. 24.

CHAPTER V.

1. The division of chapters is unfortunate here; for the two are very intimately connected. Having spoken of the unseen and endless glory of the future life, the apostle adds his confident assurance that such a life will immediately succeed the present. ¶ *For we know.* "Paul is giving a reason why he and his fellow-laborers did not become weary and faint in their work. The reason was, that they knew that even if their body should die, they had an inheritance reserved for them in heaven." — *Barnes.* "We know" is a strong expression. But Paul had seen the Lord Jesus after his resurrection, and had not a shadow of doubt that God would in like manner raise up all his children. Ch. iv. 14. "I am indifferent to the decay and wearing away of my present outward frame; because I know that another and higher organization is awaiting me hereafter, — a higher life which shall not extinguish my present being, but give me new powers engrafted upon it." — *Stanley.* ¶ *That if our earthly house of this tabernacle.* Or, *tent.* This is an unusual and somewhat harsh expression. The reference is doubtless to the human body. But the apostle is supposed to have had in his mind the image of a tent used as a shelter to the body, and thus figuratively to have described the habitation of the soul. The idea is expressed by various translations. "We may render, our earthly tabernacular house." — *Bloomfield.* "Our earthly house, which is a tent." — *Macknight.* "The

nacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed

tent which is my earthly house. The shifting tent is here opposed to the enduring mansion; the vile body of flesh and blood, to the spiritual body of the glorified saint." — *Conybeare.* ¶ *Were dissolved.* Rather, thrown down, or destroyed, as the word is generally translated. It is applied to the destruction of edifices, Matt. xxiv. 2; xxvi. 61; and figuratively, Gal. ii. 18; and it is fitly used in this metaphor of a tent. The idea is simply, if this body die and return to dust. ¶ *We have a building of God, &c.* The "spiritual body," 1 Cor. xv. 44, is called "a building," and "a house not made with hands," in contrast with the tent which was made with hands, by which metaphor the "natural body" is described. It is of God, or fashioned by him, not because he did not fashion the human body, but because the tent, the figure used for the natural body, was made by human hands. ¶ *Eternal in the heavens.* Eternal, in contrast with the perishing tent, or human body; in the heavens, or in the future state of existence, in contrast with the earth, our present habitation. We are not to understand that this heavenly house was actually erected, or the spiritual body fashioned and preserved as it were in heaven, until the arrival of its occupant; but that "the moment that our present house is destroyed, that very moment a new habitation awaits us." — *Stanley.* We shall be raised in spiritual bodies, fitted to dwell in heaven.

2. *For in this.* Namely, in this earthly house, or tent, the human body. ¶ *We groan.* See note on Rom. viii. 23, where the same desire is expressed for deliverance from earthly woes, and an admission to the joys of heaven. ¶ *Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, &c.*

upon with our house which is from heaven :

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in *this* taber-

nacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

The metaphor is here changed, so as to embrace both the idea of a house or tent, and of a garment or vesture. "The explanation of this abrupt transition from one to the other may be found in the image which, both from his occupation and his birth-place, would naturally occur to the apostle, the tent of Cilician hair-cloth, which might almost equally suggest the idea of a habitation and of a vesture." — *Stanley*.

3. *If so be, &c.* This verse has been variously interpreted. Some suppose the apostle to intimate that he might survive until the coming of Christ, and be changed without suffering death. 1 Cor. xv. 51-53. "Literally, If indeed I shall be found clad, and not stripped of my clothing. That is, If at the Lord's coming, I shall be found still living in the flesh." — *Conybeare*. Others take substantially the same view. But, in my judgment, although it gives an easy sense of this verse and the next, it does not well harmonize with the general context, which certainly contemplates the benefits consequent on the death of the body. Hence I prefer the interpretation briefly expressed thus:—"The sense appears to be simply this: since being so clothed, that is, having put on this dress, we shall not be found naked; that is, destitute of a body, whatever may become of our earthly one. See 1 Cor. xv. 35, 54." — *Bloomfield*. Or, more largely, thus: "It means that in that future state, the soul will not be naked; that is, destitute of any body, or covering. The present body will be laid aside. It will return to corruption, and the disembodied spirit will ascend to God and to heaven. It will be disencumbered of the body with which it has been so long clothed. But we are not thence to infer that it will be destitute of a body; that it will remain a naked soul. It will be

clothed there in its appropriate and glorified body; and will have an appropriate habitation there." — *Barnes*. To prevent possible misapprehension, I add, that by the "disembodied spirit" which ascends to God, I understand, and I presume the author intended to be understood, "disembodied" simply in regard to the earthly body, but clothed and embodied, in respect to its "appropriate and glorious body." For thus the apostle represents the case in 1 Cor. xv. 44. See note at the end of 1 Cor. ch. xvi.

4. *For we that are in this tabernacle.* Or *tent*. The same double metaphor of the tent and vesture is still continued. We who yet dwell in mortal bodies. ¶ *Do groan*. The fact of groaning is repeated, with an addition, which follows, assigning a reason, and qualifying the declaration in ver. 2. ¶ *Being burdened*. Oppressed by toils, and trials, and afflictions. Ch. iv. 8-12. ¶ *Not for that we would be unclothed*. Not because we desire to be naked. Not simply because we desire deliverance from the mortal body. Such a desire would indicate impatience rather than submission; an unwillingness to endure the burdens which God imposes; a mere weariness of life. ¶ *But clothed upon*. To be clothed with the spiritual body; to become a partaker of immortality and its accompanying blessings. This was what the apostle desired. He had a "desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better," as a personal consideration, though he was content to "abide in the flesh," and submit to still further trials and afflictions, so long as it should be "needful" to his brethren. Phil. i. 23-25. There is nothing unchristian in such a state of mind. While we patiently submit to the afflictions of this life, we may still earnestly anticipate the joys and the glories of the next. See note on Rom. viii. 23. ¶ *That mortality might be*

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore *we are* always

swallowed up of life. These words "are best explained, with Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Theodoret, 'that thus the mortal principle may be absorbed and annihilated by the vivifying and immortal one.' Compare 1 Cor. xv. 54." — *Bloomfield.* It is not unnatural to suppose that with the end of mortality the apostle included the idea of an end also of all which is peculiar to mortality; and the following paraphrase is not strained:—"That sin, and misery, and weakness, and whatever in this world accompanies mortality, may be swallowed up in an eternal life of happiness." — *Macknight.*

5. *Now he that hath wrought us, &c.* This verse is very similar to Rom. viii. 20-23. In both places, the fact is declared that God hath ordained that men shall pass through mortality to immortality; that they shall first be "subject to vanity," and afterwards "be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;" and that he hath given his children full assurance of his purpose and a lively hope of its accomplishment, by granting them "the first-fruits," or an "earnest, of the spirit." So *Bloomfield* and others. *Macknight,* by "the self-same thing," understands the firm expectation and desire of a change from mortality to immortality, rather than the change itself. He paraphrases thus:—"Now he who hath effectually wrought us to entertain this very desire is God himself, who also hath given us the earnest of our obtaining a heavenly habitation, in the gifts of the spirit which he hath bestowed on us."

6. *Therefore.* Having such full confidence that God will accomplish all which he has purposed; that he will bestow the heavenly house when the earthly house perishes. ¶ *We are always confident.* "We are always of good cheer." — *Tyndale.* "We are bold, also, and have no fear of death."

confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

— *Macknight.* "We are courageous in encountering danger, nay, death itself." — *Bloomfield.* "In all my perils I am of good courage." — *Conybeare.* This it was which sustained him, so that he did not faint, ch. iv. 16; this enabled him to meet all trials with cheerfulness and courage. ¶ *Knowing that, &c.* See note on ver. 1. ¶ *Whilst we are at home in the body.* While we inhabit earthly bodies; while we live in the flesh; while the present life continues. ¶ *We are absent from the Lord.* Not that we are utterly separated from him while we dwell in mortal bodies; for his assurance to his disciples was, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 20. He assured them, moreover, that, through the influence of the spirit, both himself and the Father would come to them and make their abode with them. John xiv. 23. The apostle here speaks of that more intimate presence which he hoped to enjoy with the Lord in the immortal state, and to which Christ refers in John xiv. 3: "I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." In this sense Paul felt himself to be "absent from the Lord;" and this absence he knew would continue so long as he dwelt in a mortal body. The idea is repeated, with an addition, in ver. 8.

7. *For we walk by faith, not by sight.* See note on 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "Our pilgrimage or journey is on trust, and not because we see our home." — *Stanley.* "In our present state, we live, that is, lead our spiritual life, by faith only in Christ; not in the sight of him, as we shall when released from the thralldom of the body." — *Bloomfield.* Firm as his faith was, it did not amount to absolute knowledge; and while he had such "joy and peace in believing," that his hope abounded "through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 13,

8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear be-

he was conscious that through admission to the immediate presence of the Lord, where he might see "face to face," additional glories would be unfolded to his view, and he should then know even as he was known. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The consciousness of his present want, which could only be supplied through the change from mortality to immortality, gave additional strength to the desire expressed in ver. 8.

8. *We are confident.* See note on ver. 6. ¶ *And willing, rather to be absent from the body, &c.* *Willing* hardly expresses the full force of the original, which is generally translated *pleased or well pleased*. I am desirous rather to depart; it would give me pleasure. I would prefer to die. "Yea my heart fails me not, but I would gladly suffer banishment from the body, and have my home with Christ." — *Conybeare*. The same idea is more fully expressed in Phil. i. 23. Both this verse and what precedes it in this chapter obviously indicate Paul's belief and expectation that the present life shall be immediately succeeded by immortal existence; that as soon as the soul leaves the earthly body it is clothed upon by the heavenly. With scarcely any abatement, I can cheerfully adopt the following remarks:—"This also proves that the spirits of the saints, when they depart, are with the Redeemer; that is are at once taken to heaven. It demonstrates, (1) That they are not annihilated. (2) That they do not *sleep*, and remain in an unconscious state, as Dr. Priestley supposes. (3) That they are not in some intermediate state, either in a state of purgatory, as the Papists suppose, or in a state where all the souls of the just and the unjust are assembled in a common abode, as many Protestants have supposed; but (4) That they dwell with Christ; they are with the Lord. They abide in his presence; they partake of his joy and his glory."

— *Barnes*. Whether the foregoing remarks concerning "the spirits of the saints" are not substantially applicable to all men, may be considered elsewhere. The immediate succession of the immortal state upon the close of the mortal, is the idea which is here especially prominent.

9. *Wherefore we labor.* "Wherefore, since we have such exalted hopes, we strive to the uttermost." — *Bloomfield*. "Paul made it a point of constant effort, it was his leading and constant aim, to live so as to be acceptable to God, and to meet his approbation, wherever he was."

— *Barnes*. ¶ *That, whether present or absent.* The idea is, whether in this life or the next: whether present in the earthly body or absent from it; whether in the immediate presence of the Lord, or absent from him in that sense. See note on ver. 6. He desired to perform his duty and to be approved, at all times and in all places, here or hereafter. ¶ *We may be accepted of him.* "We may be acceptable to him." — *Haweis and Macknight*. "I may be pleasing in his sight." — *Conybeare*. That I may be approved, both in act and motive. That I may in all respects be conformed to the image of Christ.

10. *For we must all appear.* Rather, we must all *be made manifest*, as the word is generally translated. See ver.

11. Our true character will be distinctly seen. "We must all be made manifest without disguise." — *Conybeare*. We cannot deceive him, nor obtain his approval by any false pretences; for he knows our inmost thoughts. John ii. 24, 25. ¶ *Before the judgment-seat of Christ.* The tribunal of Christ. A figurative expression, denoting that the Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son." John v. 22. "The image of Christ on the judgment-seat is the same as that in Rom. xiv. 10; and the expression is peculiar to these two passages, being evidently taken from the tribunal of

fore the judgment seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the

the Roman magistrate as the most august representation of justice which the world at that time, or perhaps ever, exhibited. It was a lofty seat, raised on an elevated platform, usually at the end of the Basilica, so that the figure of the judge must have been seen towering above the crowd which thronged the long nave of the building. So sacred and solemn did this seat and its platform appear in the eyes, not only of the heathen, but of the Christian society of the Roman empire, that when, two centuries later, the Basilica became the model of the Christian place of worship, the name of *βημα* (or tribunal) was transferred to the throne of the bishop, which then occupied the same place in the apse that had before been appointed to the judgment-seat of the prætor." — *Stanley*. Under this metaphor, to give a more vivid representation of the idea, the apostle declares that all must be made manifest before Christ, in his character of judge. ¶ *That every one may receive the things done in his body.* The words *done* and *his* have nothing corresponding to them in the original, but are supplied by the translators. "That every one may receive things in the body." — *Macknight*. The idea is, that each shall receive a just and appropriate reward. ¶ *According to that he hath done, &c.* The reward is according to the several deserts of men. By *that he hath done*, we are to understand, not merely *acts*, but thoughts and intentions. The idea manifestly is, that each shall receive a reward appropriate to his actual moral character, which character is distinctly understood by the judge, being manifest in his sight.

So much for the several terms used in this verse. The whole verse is usually interpreted as descriptive of a general judgment in the future life, involving endless happiness on the one hand, and endless misery on the other. But the apostle certainly says no such thing. He does not say that judgment shall be rendered in the future life, nor that it involves such consequences. Nor is any such idea legitimately con-

veyed by the context. On the contrary, both text and context indicate a present rather than a future judgment, if we insist on a literal rendering of the original. In my judgment, however, the apostle here announces a general truth, without any limitation of time; to wit, that, as the divinely appointed judge, Christ knoweth the moral condition of every man, and renders to each "a just recompense of reward." And this judgment, it should be observed, is rendered according to the present character of men, not according to the past. For example; the persons addressed in Rom. vi. 21-23, had formerly been sinful, and, as the fruit or wages of sin, had endured that misery which is called death; but after they "were made free from sin and became servants to God," they enjoyed life or happiness, as the fruit of holiness. In each case, they received an appropriate reward, according to their character for the time being. See also Ezek. xviii. 20-30. So Paul had once been "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," Tim. i. 13; and he found it "hard to kick against the pricks." Acts ix. 5. But his character had now changed; it was now his earnest endeavor to be a faithful servant of him whom he formerly persecuted. And he expected to receive of the Lord, not according to the character which formerly distinguished him, but according to the character which was now manifest in the sight of his judge; for this only was what was now subject to approval or disapproval. And for the future, whether "present or absent," it was his earnest desire to be approved for his faithfulness, knowing that the truth would be manifest and that he should receive a reward appropriate to his character for the time being. This idea is manifest in the whole context. Paul declares that he has labored faithfully, and has been cheered and encouraged in his labors. He expresses a desire to continue faithful, so that he may continue to be approved; knowing that his true character is at all times manifest to him unto whom the Father hath committed all

things *done* in his body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

judgment. And he expects a continuance of approval only as connected with a continuance of faithfulness. He does not claim exemption from the general rule. We must *all* be made manifest, and be appropriately rewarded; and what is true of all men, he says, is true of me personally. I shall be at all times manifest in his sight, and amenable to his judgment; and therefore I strive earnestly that I may continually be approved. In this view of the case, it is seen that judgment is not delayed to a far distant period, and then rendered according to past character instead of present; but that throughout the reign of Christ, he renders to every one a reward appropriate to his present character, and that each change of character involves a corresponding variation in the reward. This judgment is now in operation, in the present world. We are as truly before the judgment-seat of Christ now as we ever shall be; we are already manifest in his sight; see ver. 11, where the same word occurs which is here rendered "appear;" and even here the fruits of sin and of holiness are experienced. If it be true, as many believe, that the same difference in moral character which now exists will extend into the future life, then doubtless the same process of judgment will also continue; for wherever sin exists, it will be manifest to the judge, and will receive its appropriate reward. Whether men will actually be sinful in the future life, does not appear from this passage. The simple announcement here is, that at any time, and at all times, the hearts of men are manifest in the sight of him who is authorized to render to each an appropriate reward. Paul was stimulated to faithfulness by his desire of approval, "whether present or absent;" he desired it in the present life as much as in the future; he labored, not that he might be approved hereafter, but that he might be approved now. The same motive may properly stimulate us also to faithfulness. We

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made mani-

should be both admonished and encouraged by the consideration that our judge understands our true character, both the aggravations and the palliations of our manifold infirmities; and that he judgeth not according to the appearance, but with righteous judgment. John vii. 24. For some remarks on the subject of a judgment according to works, see notes on Rom. ii. 6-11.

11. *Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord.* We are not to understand by *terror* anything inconsistent with a firm trust and confidence; for such an emotion is inconsistent with pure love to God; see 1 John iv. 18, where the same word is translated *fear*. The idea is, being sensible that a just retribution is rendered to every man according to his moral deserts; that all are continually responsible to one who cannot be deceived. And while one joyfully anticipates the happiness consequent on approval, he should cautiously refrain from all which would subject him to disapproval, and consequent misery. It should be recollected that the apostle is defending himself against the charges of his adversaries. The thought of his continual responsibility "brings before him the insinuations of concealment and dishonesty, which he had before answered, ch. iii. 1—iv. 6, and he once more protests the entire sincerity of his conduct, ver. 11-13, appealing, first, to the overwhelming motive which impelled him, ver. 14-21, secondly, to his own self-denying conduct, ch. vi. 1-10." — *Stanley*. ¶ *We persuade men.* I endeavor to win them to Christ, through faith in his gospel. I persuade them to believe in Jesus and the resurrection, in short, I preach the gospel of reconciliation, ver. 19, 20. ¶ *But we are made manifest unto God.* See ver. 10, where the word here rendered *made manifest* is translated *appear*. God sees my heart and knows my motives. To him, who is my supreme judge, I appeal, that I

fest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give

you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

am sincere in my endeavors to convert men to Christ. Knowing my responsibility to him, and that my most secret thoughts are manifest in his sight, I pursue my labor earnestly, feeling confident of his approval. Paul was not looking to a future period, when his character should become known; but he realized that it was already known, and that a present judgment was rendered accordingly. However glorious and inspiring were the hopes which he cherished of blessings to be freely bestowed through grace, "not of works, lest any man should boast," still he believed, and acted upon the belief that God "will render to every man according to his deeds." See note on Rom. ii. 6. "Though I seek to win men, yet my uprightness is manifest in the sight of God. He was accused by the Judaizers of *persuading men*, and *pleasing men*. See Gal. i. 10."—*Conybeare*. Be it so, says the apostle. Whatever I do, my motives are manifest to my supreme judge; and I ought not to be suspected of wilfully incurring his disapproval, while I acknowledge my accountability to him. ¶ *And I trust also are made manifest in your consciences*. Under such circumstances, I trust you also must be conscious of my sincerity, and will not even suspect me of dishonesty.

12. *For we commend not ourselves again unto you*. See ch. iii. 1. "This alludes to the accusation of vanity brought against him by his antagonists."—*Conybeare*. He had just appealed to God that he was honest and sincere, and had urged such proofs of integrity as he trusted might satisfy the Corinthians. Lest he should be misrepresented, he adds, that he has not done this for his own sake, but for theirs. ¶ *But give you occasion to glory on our behalf, &c.* That you may have full satisfaction as to my integrity, and may be able to triumph against all gainsayers. "From this it appears

that the faction had taken occasion, from the things which the apostle in his former letter had advanced in proof of his apostleship, to speak of him as a vain-glorious person. And this being reported to him, he told them that what he had written, and was going to write, concerning his own faithfulness and other virtues as an apostle, neither proceeded from vanity, nor was meant to recommend himself to them as an apostle, but was intended to enable his friends to give a proper answer to those who blamed them for preferring him to the false teacher, in whom they boasted on account of a few external qualities, while he possessed no real goodness of heart."—*Macknight*. Thus might his true disciples glory on his behalf. ¶ *Which glory in appearance, but not in heart*. Who boast of certain outward qualifications, but are not heartily devoted to the service of Christ. "The words are meant for the false teachers, who were proud of their external advantages, which excited the admiration of the multitude, to the neglect of the virtues of the heart, and the testimony of a good conscience."—*Bloomfield*. "This is the most explicit mention of his opponents in this part of the Epistle, and is to be compared with the more open attacks of ch. x. 2, 7; xi. 18. They pride themselves on their outward pretensions, their dignified appearance as compared with my weak presence, ch. x. 10; their Jewish descent, ch. xi. 22; their commendatory letters, ch. iii. 1; not on that deep sympathy which lies at the bottom of my heart for you. Ch. iii. 2; iv. 6; vi. 11."—*Stanley*.

13. *For whether we be beside ourselves, &c.* This verse has been very variously interpreted. "For ye may tell them, that whether we be beside ourselves, as they affirm, because we expose ourselves to death, it is for God's glory; or whether we be sober, as they think, in shunning persecution, it is for

13 For whether we be beside ourselves, *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause.

your good." — *Macknight*. But the following remarks, in which other judicious commentators substantially agree, seem to be as definite and correct as our present means of information will justify. "It is impossible to determine precisely these allusions, without knowing the charges against him, at which they are aimed. That the words themselves signify respectively 'to be mad,' 'to be of a sound mind,' is clear. See Mark iii. 21; Acts xxvi. 25. On the one hand the 'madness' may allude either to the extravagant freedom, as it was thought, with which he spoke of his own claims; see ch. xi. 1, 16, 17, where he himself calls it by the name of 'folly;' or more generally to the ecstasies and enthusiasm which led Festus to call him mad. Acts xxvi. 24. On the other hand, the 'soundness of mind' which also was misunderstood, may have been the accommodation to all men, 1 Cor. ix. 20, which led to the insinuation of worldly wisdom, ch. xii. 16; 1 Cor. ix. 18, 19. In either case, it was not himself that he wished to serve. His enthusiasm came from devotion to God; his seeming worldliness, from devotion to men." — *Stanley*.

14. *For the love of Christ*. Namely, the love which Christ bears to us and has manifested to us; not our love to him. See note on Rom. viii. 35. ¶ *Constraineth us*. Impels me; urges me on in the work; incites me to faithfulness in preaching the gospel, and in doing my utmost to persuade men to embrace him as the true Messiah. ¶ *Because we thus judge*. Because I thus conclude; this is the settled conviction of my mind. Paul is about to state the reason why the love of Christ constrained him to diligence and faithfulness; namely, that the manifestation of Christ's love was such as made it the duty of all his disciples to proclaim it, and gave them encouragement that their labor should not be in vain. ¶ *That if one died for all*.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

That since one, that is, Christ, died for all men. "The one who died for all here is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus. — The phrase 'for all' obviously means for all mankind; for every man." — *Barnes*. "It is scarcely necessary to observe how strongly this inculcates the doctrine of universal redemption, which Dr. A. Clarke remarks, no apostolic man ever did doubt, or could doubt. See 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9. Indeed, as observes Bishop Bull, in his Exam. Cens., 'unless Christ be understood to have died for *all*, that foundation on which the ministers of the gospel build exhortations of this kind, will be *always uncertain* and very often *false*. Always uncertain, because it cannot be made manifest to men *who* are the elect. Very frequently false, as often, namely, as it is used to the *non-elect*, who, on this ground of redemption, would not be held bound to live unto Christ, unless it were presupposed that Christ had already redeemed them. Finally, Christ himself could not, in right of his own death, Rom. xiv. 9, claim supreme dominion over all and each, unless he had really died for all and every man.'" — *Bloomfield*. To this I only add, that if Christ hath actually redeemed all men, it is by no means probable that any one of the number will be finally lost. Having been thus lifted up, he will draw all men unto him. John xii. 32. God will not permit his death to be unavailing; but having delivered up his Son for us all, he will "also freely give us all things." Rom. viii. 32. ¶ *Then were all dead*. This has been generally understood to mean, all were dead *in sin*. And doubtless such was or had been the condition of all who had attained the age of accountability. Even those who had not become capable of actual sin, and of technical death in sin, were nevertheless so far dead as that they were destitute of spiritual life. More recent commentators, however, understand death

15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

to sin. "The best commentary on the 14th and 15th verses is Gal. ii. 20. There remains, therefore, the interpretation now almost universally adopted: 'If Christ died for all, then it follows that all for whom he died, died to sin with him.' It is borne out by the words, and agrees both with the apostle's statements elsewhere, and with the context. It is the same in substance as in Rom. vi. 1-14, which throughout agrees with this passage in representing the death of sin, and of the old nature of man, through and with Christ's death, as the necessary prelude to the newness of life, to which here, as there, he is urging his hearers. Compare also Rom. xiv. 7; Col. iii. 3."—*Stanley*. If this be the true interpretation, and it certainly appears reasonable, we must understand the apostle to speak of the effect designed as already accomplished, as in Heb. ii. 8, 9. As certainly as Christ hath died for all, just so certainly shall all, in due time, die to sin, and live anew in him. We see not yet this accomplished; but Christ hath died, and the result is certain.

15. *And that he died for all, &c.* See note on ver. 14. The object for which Christ labored and died is still further illustrated. It was not merely that men should die to sin, or cease to be sinful; or, if the other interpretation be preferred, not merely because they were already dead in sin; but it was that they should become alive unto righteousness; that they should enjoy spiritual life; that they should live "unto him who died for them and rose again," by obeying his precepts and imitating his spirit and example. Of course, the most devoted disciple on earth will fall short of perfection in this regard; but all should strive to approach it as nearly as possible. See note on Rom. vi. 2. Hence Paul acknowledges that the love of Christ, ver. 14, manifested in his death, con-

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

strained him to faithfulness in the ministry, and to a cheerful and confident fortitude amidst all the trials and afflictions which attended it. He did not feel at liberty to live unto himself; namely, to consult his own temporal convenience or welfare; but he considered it to be his imperative duty, to devote himself entirely to the service of his Master, and to the accomplishment of the work assigned him.

16. *Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh.* We do not thus recognize any man. The connection is here obscure. But the idea seems to be, that inasmuch as Christ had died for all, no earthly distinctions of race or kindred should be longer regarded. "The best commentators are agreed, that the apostle here glances at those who, like the false teachers, prided themselves, and were esteemed by others, on account of some personal and external advantages; as having known Christ, or his relatives, or the apostles, in Judea."—*Bloomfield*. "Respect no man after the flesh; on account of his nation, his ancestors, his station, or his office in the state. This was a proper improvement of the consideration that Christ died for all. For seeing God, by sending Christ to die for all, hath shown that all men are equally dear to him, and that the salvation of every man is the object of his desire, the salvation of the Jews was not to be more the object of the apostle's care than the salvation of the Gentiles, nor the salvation of the rich more than that of the poor. And therefore, although his preaching to the Gentiles might offend his unbelieving countrymen, he was not on that account to forbear it."—*Mac-knight*. There can be very little doubt that this interpretation is substantially correct. Christ had "broken down the middle wall of partition between" Jew and Gentile, in order "to make in himself of twain one new man, so making

17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature : old

things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.

peace." Eph. ii. 13-17. National distinctions, and kindred according to the flesh, were no longer to be regarded, and Paul held himself to be equally a "debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise," notwithstanding he was a Jew. Rom. i. 14. ¶ *Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, &c.* Though I may have known him as a Jew, and may have supposed the Jews to be specially interested in his mission. ¶ *Yet now henceforth know we him no more.* That is, after the flesh. I no longer regard him simply as a Jew, as a member of the chosen race to which I myself belong ; but I now recognize him as the Saviour of the world, holding the same relation to every man, inasmuch as "he died for all," in order that they might live to him. Some have supposed the apostle to mean that he had formerly looked for a Messiah who should be a temporal prince, but now acknowledged a spiritual deliverer, and had thus abandoned his carnal opinions, or opinions after the flesh. Doubtless such a change had been wrought in his mind. But it is not probable that he refers to it here. Nothing in the context indicates such an intention. The former interpretation harmonizes better with the general scope of the passage.

17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ.* In a very important sense, all men belong to Christ, are in him as members of the body of which he is the head. See note on Rom. viii. 9. But the special reference here is to that condition of discipleship, in which, through the influence of his spirit, men "live unto him which died for them and rose again." Those, and those only, who imbibe the spirit of Christ, are in him, in the sense here indicated. ¶ *He is a new creature.* Sometimes expressed by being "born again." See 1 Pet. i. 23, and note on John iii. 5. "The alteration made in the minds and manners of men, by the faith of the gospel, was so great, that it might

be called regeneration ; and the person so regenerated might be considered as a new creature."—*Macknight.* "He is wholly changed conformably to the new and spiritual religion of Christ, which requires a renewal of the heart. The next words, *old things have passed away, &c.*, are illustrative of the preceding, and must not be taken in the limited sense assigned by many modern commentators, but interpreted according to their full import." As regarded the Jew, it would include an abandonment of all his *former* prejudices and narrow views ; an undergoing that great change of principles and feelings, which may best be conceived by contrasting together the dispensations of the law and the Gospel. As it regarded the Gentile, it would denote a still greater change ; implying a total abandonment of the errors of atheism, or polytheism, and abjuring of those demoralizing principles which were generated by each of them. Finally, as regarded *both*, it implied a complete abandonment of sin and immorality, or renouncing the works of the flesh and the devil, a ceasing to live after the flesh, and henceforth a living after the spirit ; a change which might well be called a new creature."—*Bloomfield.* The connection between this verse and the preceding is hinted by *Macknight* : "He hath acquired new views of things, and dispositions, and follows a better course of life : by which wonderful change, whatever his station be, he hath acquired a dignity far superior to that which he formerly derived from his birth, or fortune, or condition ; he is truly estimable on account of the excellence of his own character." The general idea is, since Christ hath died for all, I do not recognize him as the representative of any particular nation or kindred, but as the universal Saviour ; nor do I regard distinctions among men, arising from race or nationality, but only such as result from the operation of the divine Spirit ; those who have already been brought under its influence are spiritually united to Christ,

18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath

given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in

and their former earthly distinctions "are passed away." A like change awaits those who are yet aliens, because Christ hath died that they should live unto him; and the accomplishment of that purpose, though not yet visible to men, is secured in the sight of God. See note on ver. 14.

18. *And all things are of God.* Namely, all things pertaining to the glorious spiritual transformation of which the apostle is speaking. The gathering of all things in Christ, both things in heaven and things in earth, namely, all mankind, is "according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself." Eph. i. 8-10. It is a plan, prompted by his love, devised by his wisdom, and executed by his power, through the instruments and means of his own appointment. "All the means of salvation by Christ, and all its blessings." — *Bloomfield.* *All things* "is the new world spoken of in ver. 17, as if he said, 'the new world, no less than the ancient world, proceeds from God; from the love not only of Christ, but of God.' Here there is the same reference to God as the ultimate Author of all, which occurs so frequently in St. Paul; ch. v. 5; i. 21; iv. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 23; xv. 28. In the last of these passages especially, the thought is the same as here; because there, as here, he is speaking of the change at the end of the world, 'that God may be all in all.'" — *Stanley.* This writer understands the apostle to speak of a change, commenced indeed on the earth, but consummated only in the immortal state; yet here as well as there, dependent on God as its "ultimate Author." ¶ *Who hath reconciled us to himself.* "He it is who reconciled me to himself by Jesus Christ." — *Conybeare.* Doubtless the apostle included with himself all who had already been brought under the influence of the same spirit. It has been believed by very many, that Christ died to reconcile God to man; that his death was an atoning sacrifice, whereby the wrath of

God was placated, and he became reconciled. Singularly, however, the English word *atonement* occurs only once in the New Testament, and in that case men are said to receive it. See Rom. v. 11. And *reconciliation*, which is the ordinary translation of the same Greek word, is uniformly used in like manner. See note on Rom. v. 10. In the present case, the *reconciliation* is manifestly of man to God. "Of course, all the change which takes place must be on the part of man, for God will not change, and the purpose of the plan of reconciliation is to effect such a change in man as to make him in fact reconciled to God, and at agreement with him." — *Barnes.* ¶ *And hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.* The same word which is rendered *atonement* in Rom. v. 11. Hath made me a minister of the new testament or covenant; hath placed me in the apostleship, as an "ambassador for Christ" to urge you also to become reconciled to God, to be convinced of his sincere and infinite love, manifested in the gift of his Son, ver. 14; Rom. v. 8; and to love and obey him in return. See ver. 20.

19. *To wit.* This introduces a description of the "ministry of reconciliation," or of its great theme. ¶ *That God was in Christ.* Our Lord uniformly acknowledged himself as the agent of God, appointed for the accomplishment of a special work, and declared that for this purpose God dwelt in him, and furnished him both words and power. John iii. 17, 34; v. 30; xiv. 10. *Mac-knight* and others translate *by Christ.* This, however, does not change the sense. In either case, God performs the work through the instrumentality of his Son. The reconciliation of men to himself is ascribed to God as its "ultimate Author." ¶ *Reconciling the world unto himself.* "The world here evidently means the human race generally, without distinction of nation, age, or rank. The whole world was alienated from him, and he sought to have it reconciled. This is one incidental

Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

proof that God designed that the plan of salvation should be adapted to all men." — *Barnes*. Nothing need be added to this note, except that the purpose of God is sure of accomplishment. In his sight, it is already accomplished. See note on ver. 14. Having done so much for the reconciliation of the whole world, the result is sure. Rom. viii. 31, 32. ¶ *Not imputing their trespasses unto them, &c.* "And the proof of this reconciliation is, first, that he now forbears to charge the reconciled world with their offences; secondly, that he placed upon me the responsibility of teaching the reconciliation. — For the sense of the passage, compare Rom. iii. 25; and for the words, Rom. iv. 8; Col. ii. 13." — *Stanley*. "The act of forgiving sin is conceived in the 'not reckoning their trespasses,' as abiding, extending through the entire history of humanity. It is however hardly necessary to state that with this negative side the positive one of imparting righteousness must be considered as connected. For that man only can truly believe in the forgiveness of sin in whom the new birth has taken place." — *Olshausen*. Remission of just punishment is not taught here; all must receive a recompense according to their deserts, whether good or bad, ver. 10; and such is the uniform description of divine justice. But when God has reconciled the world to himself, he will not charge men with their former alienation; when he has forgiven and taken away their sins, he will not make them a subject of further accusation; but, in the strong language of the Scriptures, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," saith the Lord, Heb. x. 17; they shall be as if they had never existed. ¶ *And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* Hath communicated to me the gospel of his grace, containing an assurance of reconciliation. The difference between this and a similar phrase in ver. 18, is

that there the office of an apostle is indicated, and here, the message which he was commissioned to deliver.

20. *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.* "Therefore I am an ambassador for Christ." — *Conybeare*. He claims to be not only an apostle, sent to deliver a certain message, or to perform a certain duty, but an ambassador, representing his principal, and fully authorized to speak in his name. "He now turns to the directly practical object which had been brooding in his mind since the 17th verse, this conversion, the second conversion, of the Corinthians themselves, from the sin, whatever it might be, which interrupted their reunion with God. For them his mission became especially significant; and he now proceeds to unfold it. The *task*, ver. 18, and the *word*, ver. 19, which he had received from God, found its natural fulfilment in this field. He had spoken before of Christ's love urging him forward in their behalf; he now comes before them as the representative of Christ." — *Stanley*. ¶ *As though God did beseech you by us.* Here again God is represented as the "ultimate Author" of the blessings revealed in the gospel, as the being who invites his children, through Jesus Christ and his apostles, to be reconciled to himself. "The gospel message is God speaking to men through the ministry, and entreating them to be reconciled." — *Barnes*. ¶ *We pray you in Christ's stead.* Jesus Christ was the divinely authorized messenger of God's grace. His apostles were empowered by him, and commanded, to "teach all nations," and to "preach the gospel to every creature." Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15; Acts xxvi. 16-18. This they were to do, as his disciples, and in his name. When Paul, therefore, exhorted the Corinthians, it was as though God addressed them through him, instead or in the place of Jesus,

21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

who had ascended into heaven. ¶ *Be ye reconciled to God.* See note on Rom. v. 10. Dismiss from your minds those false ideas of his character, which have heretofore repelled you from him. Extirpate from your hearts all opposition to his divine will. Reform in your conduct all which is inconsistent with his holy law. Approach him with filial reverence, love him with the whole heart, obey his commandments, meet his will in all things with cheerful submission, and cherish always a confident trust that he will bless you more richly and abundantly than you can ask or think. Thus loving and trusting him, being guided by his spirit and conforming to his will, you will be changed more and more into the divine image, and will become, so far as finite beings may resemble the infinite, "perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 48.

21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us.* This language, spoken concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, is highly figurative. "What is the exact idea which the apostle intended to convey? I answer, it cannot be, (1) That he was literally *sin* in the abstract, or sin as such. No one can pretend this. The expression must be, therefore, in some sense, figurative. Nor (2) can it mean that he was a *sinner*, for it is said in immediate connection, that he 'knew no sin,' and it is everywhere said that he was holy, harmless, undefiled. Nor (3) can it mean that he was, in any proper sense of the word, *guilty*, for no one is truly guilty who is not personally a transgressor of the law."—*Barnes*. To which I add (4) that it cannot mean that God regarded and treated him as a sinner, as some suppose, because God is both wise and just; he knows the true character; and while he graciously bestows favors on the guilty, which they do not merit, he never punishes the innocent, nor treats them as if

CHAPTER VI.

WE then, *as workers together with him*, beseech you also

they were guilty. I suppose that, in different phraseology, indeed, and under a somewhat different figure, the apostle here conveys substantially the same idea which is expressed in Rom. v. 6-10. See the notes. In rescuing men from sinfulness, or saving his people from their sins, our Lord submitted to severe and painful labors, and closed his ministry by enduring death on the cross; that being the strongest possible manifestation of his love. John xv. 13. The metaphor is probably drawn from the sin-offerings prescribed by the ritual law. But to suppose that God actually offered his own Son as a sacrifice to himself, or that, in any proper sense, he inflicted on him the punishment due to the guilty, is abhorrent to all just conceptions of the divine character. ¶ *Who knew no sin.* Who was pure, sinless, holy. See Heb. vii. 26; 1 Pet. ii. 22. ¶ *That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* This is a Hebraism, meaning the same as *divinely righteous*. That divine grace, manifested in the character, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ, may turn men from sinfulness and make them righteous. He was the chosen medium through whom God was reconciling the world to himself, ver. 18, 19. This appeal to the crowning evidence of his love is designed to enforce the exhortation in ver. 20. Thus does the grace of God accomplish what men in all ages have vainly attempted; it makes us divinely righteous. See note on Rom. i. 17.

CHAPTER VI.

This chapter is intimately connected with the preceding. The apostle urges his brethren to become reconciled, as in ch. v. 20, by the consideration of his own exertions to make them sensible of the grace of God, ver. 1-10; he asks their sympathy, ver. 11-13; and exhorts them to live in conformity with the spirit of the gospel, ver.

that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in

the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

14-18. "He urges, for some reason unknown to us, with still more vehemence, the appeal he had made in ch. v. 20; and now, as ch. iv. 7, the mention of his great mission recalls again to his mind the sufferings and troubles which he had undergone; and in the climax of triumph which the consciousness of his victory suggests, he closes this long digression." — *Stanley*.

1. *We then, as workers together with him.* Some suppose the meaning to be that the apostles were "laborers together with God," in this great work; in which case the interpretation should be as exhibited in the note on 1 Cor. iii. 9. But as the apostle, under the plural form of speech, probably continues here to speak particularly of his personal desire for the spiritual welfare of the Corinthians, and his zealous and arduous labors for its accomplishment, a different interpretation seems preferable. "Moreover, as working together with him, I exhort you," &c. — *Conybeare*. Christ had labored to commend "the grace of God" to men. Paul was now engaged in the same work, in a more humble capacity, indeed, yet in a very honorable one, being an accredited "ambassador for Christ," and having authority to speak God's truth in "Christ's stead." Chapter v. 20. He might, without impropriety, claim to be working together with Christ in "the ministry of reconciliation." Ch. v. 18. *Macknight* has an interpretation probably peculiar to himself, which is sufficiently indicated in his paraphrase: — "Now, fellow-laborers in the ministry of reconciliation at Corinth, I, as Christ's ambassador, also beseech you not to receive that honorable ministry in vain." The general current of the discourse, however, seems not to justify such an application of the text. ¶ *That ye receive not the grace of God in vain.* "This we do, (1) When we do not obtain the end for which it was designed, namely, 'to teach us, denying

ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live righteously, sober, and godly, in this present world.' (2) When we receive no benefit by the grace received, and it conveys no pardon or salvation to us; so, upon supposition that there will be no resurrection, 'your faith is vain,' 1 Cor. xv. 17; and if you retain it not, 'ye have believed in vain,' 1 Cor. xv. 2. So to 'labor in vain, and run in vain,' Gal. ii. 2; and Gal. iv. 11, is to do these things without profit to them for whose sakes they are done; and those are called 'vain questions,' and 'vain words,' Tit. iii. 9, and Matt. xii. 36, which are unprofitable." — *Whitby*. The grace of God, manifested in the gospel, is unprofitable to "a hearer of the word and not a doer," Jas. i. 23, for he straightway forgetteth his need of that grace, and doth not lay hold on it by a spirit of faith. But, though it be thus unprofitable to the heedless and unbelieving, and such enter not into life, it does not follow that it shall always be inoperative in their hearts. See note on John iii. 36. So in 1 Cor. vi. 9-11, the apostle speaks of those who were temporarily so destitute of the purifying effects of grace, that they could not "inherit the kingdom of God," but who were afterwards "washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God."

2. *For he saith.* God saith, by his prophet. The passage quoted is Isa. xlix. 8. The words are addressed by God to Messiah, assuring him that his request is heard and shall be granted. The substance of the request is supposed to be identical with that in Ps. ii. 8: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Both are prophetic of the universal character of the gospel, and of that divine grace which extends salvation to Gentiles as well as to Jews. ¶ *In a time accepted.* In an acceptable

3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

time. "It is a time which he had fixed as the appropriate period for extending the knowledge of his truth and his salvation."—*Barnes*. ¶ *In the day of salvation*. In the time when salvation is to be proclaimed to the Gentiles. ¶ *Have I succored thee*. I have granted thee all needed assistance. When God sent his Son into the world as the messenger of grace and salvation, he clothed him with the authority and power necessary to the accomplishment of his allotted task; and through his whole ministry upheld and sustained him by the energy of the spirit. Such aid our Lord constantly acknowledged. ¶ *Behold, now is the accepted time, &c.* The apostle makes this application of the language previously quoted. "And mind, *now* is an acceptable time, *now* is the day of salvation; the time is now come when God will fulfil his promise respecting the salvation of the Gentiles through Christ; and that salvation is now offered by those whose divine mission is confirmed by signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds; and is regarded as the accepted time, or day of salvation, to all who seek an interest in the Redeemer's kingdom."—*Bloomfield*. This verse and the preceding have been paraphrased thus: "As his ministers also, we entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain; but to remember the words of the prophet, in which God promises a day of salvation to the Gentiles; which day of salvation, be assured, is now fully come."—*Gilpin*. It may be observed, that this verse is designed to enforce the exhortation in ver. 1, on the ground that the "set time" had now arrived, when the Gentiles should receive grace and salvation. However true it may be that there is an accepted time and a day of salvation for each individual, the text has special reference to the calling of the Gentiles.

3. This verse should be construed with ver. 1; the intermediate verse being parenthetical. The apostle en-

4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience. in afflic-

larges on his efforts to discharge his duty faithfully, and not to weaken the force of his exhortation by any misconduct whatever. ¶ *Giving no offence in any thing, &c.* "Meanwhile, I take heed to give no cause of stumbling, lest blame should be cast on the ministrations wherein I serve."—*Conybear*. "Giving no occasion for despising and rejecting the gospel."—*Robinson*. The word here rendered *offence* does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament; but it is similar to that which is translated *stumbling-block* in Rom. xiv. 13. ¶ *That the ministry be not blamed*. The word *ministry* is sometimes loosely used for *ministers*, or for the clergy generally. Such is not its meaning here. *Ministration* would more definitely express the idea.

4. *But in all things*. Both in word and deed; both in public ministrations and in ordinary conduct. ¶ *Approving ourselves as the ministers of God*. "Evincing ourselves really to be persons entrusted with a divine legation. The general import of this and the verses following is, We approve ourselves as God's ministers, both by a patient endurance of the various tribulations, ver. 4, 5, to which the exercise of our office exposes us, and by the cultivation of the various virtues, ver. 6, 7, suitable to our sacred character."—*Bloomfield*. As a minister of God specially commissioned for this work, ch. v. 18, 19, Paul exhorted men to be reconciled to God, and endeavored so to conduct in all respects, that his exhortations might produce their proper effect, and that their force should not be diminished by any well-founded suspicions of his honesty, or integrity, or faithfulness. ¶ *In much patience*. In the patient endurance of trials, some of which he proceeds to mention. Not only did he patiently endure tribulation, but he even rejoiced in it, as a profitable discipline. Rom. v. 3, 4. ¶ *In afflictions, in necessities, in distresses*. "In or by much endurance, in triplets of evils, each, as

tions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprison-

ments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

6 By pureness, by knowledge,

it were, growing out of the last word of the other. The first describes his hardships generally; in crushing afflictions, in pressure of difficulties, in narrow straits. The prevailing idea through all these words is that of pressure and confinement, each stage narrower than the one before, so that no room is left for movement or escape."—*Stanley*. In what follows, the apostle specifies the particular trials which had beset him, had driven him to such straits, and had severely taxed his patience.

5. *In stripes*. He had been repeatedly scourged; "five times," he says, and "thrice beaten with rods;" ch. xi. 24, 25. See Acts xvi. 23; xxi. 32. ¶ *In imprisonments*. Only one imprisonment, previously to the date of this Epistle, is distinctly recorded, Acts xvi. 23-30; yet he declares that he had been in prison frequently, ch. xi. 23; and the facts were probably well known at Corinth. ¶ *In tumults*. The Greek word properly denotes "instability; hence disorder, commotion, tumult."—*Robinson*. It occurs in Luke xxi. 9; 1 Cor. xiv. 33; 2 Cor. xii. 20; Jas. iii. 16. Most commentators suppose the apostle to refer to the commotions and tumults excited by his adversaries among the populace, in which he was sometimes beaten and bruised, and his life in imminent peril; such, for example, as those recorded in Acts xiii. 50; xiv. 19; xviii. 12; xxi. 30. This is the most natural interpretation, and harmonizes best with what precedes. Some, however, suppose he refers to his "unsettled and wandering kind of life," occasioned by the persecutions which followed him from city to city. ¶ *In labors*. The apostle is supposed here to refer, not only to his arduous labors in the proper work of preaching the gospel, his incessant exertions to promulgate the glad tidings which had been committed to him, ch. v. 19, but also to his manual labor by which he supplied his temporal wants, *fast*, by claiming and receiving support

from others, he "should hinder the gospel of Christ." 1 Cor. ix. 12. See Acts xviii. 3; xx. 34; 1 Cor. iv. 12.

¶ *In watchings*. In sleeplessness. This "seems to refer to the abridgment of his rest by night, to make up for the time expended by day on his ministerial labors."—*Bloomfield*. The day was devoted to preaching the gospel; a part of the night, to providing for his temporal wants. He may include also the wakefulness occasioned by his anxious care for the welfare of the churches which he had planted. Ch. xi. 28. ¶ *In fastings*. Religious fasts were observed by the apostles and primitive Christians, Acts xiii. 2, 3; xiv. 23; 2 Cor. xi. 27; and these were not neglected by Paul. Besides, he sometimes fasted involuntarily, being destitute of suitable food, on his journeys from place to place. 1 Cor. iv. 11. In all these trials and afflictions, he possessed his soul in patience, Luke xxi. 19; he bore his burdens uncomplainingly, and was willing to sacrifice even his life on behalf of "the gospel of the grace of God." Acts xx. 24.

6. *By pureness*. By purity of life and conduct. He endeavored to avoid even the appearance of evil. 1 Thess. v. 22. He would not destroy or counteract the effect of his preaching, by any misconduct. In this verse, he commences speaking of other methods, besides the patient endurance of afflictions, by which he had endeavored to commend the gospel to others, and to approve himself as a faithful minister of "the word of reconciliation." "The substance of what he here says is, that it had not only been done by sufferings and trials, but by a holy life, and by entire consecration to the great cause to which he had devoted himself."—*Barnes*. ¶ *By knowledge*. This word is variously interpreted. Some suppose the apostle to mean that he communicated true knowledge to his hearers, in opposition to Jewish traditions and Gentile philosophy. But, as he speaks throughout of what he personally en-

by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

7 By the word of truth,

dured, or possessed, or practised, rather than of what he imparted to others, their opinion seems more correct who suppose him to refer to his accurate knowledge of the gospel which he preached. "Knowledge or intuition of divine truth, as in 1 Cor. xii. 8." — *Stanley*. However unprofitable and even hurtful he may have considered the vain speculations of the Greek philosophers, he highly valued the wisdom of God. 1 Cor. ii. 1-7. Ignorance of divine truth was never recommended by him as a qualification for the ministry. On the contrary, one of the facts on which he most confidently relied as proof that he was divinely called to the apostleship was, that "God had shined in his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Ch. iv. 6. ¶ *By longsuffering*. Patient endurance of trials; forbearance under provocations. ¶ *By kindness*. Not only to friends but to enemies. Matt. v. 44, 45. He endeavored to cherish that spirit of universal love, which is the substance of the divine law, and which involves the whole duty of man. Matt. xxii. 37-40; Rom. xiii. 8. While men are instinctively repelled by harshness, severity, and an appearance of hatred or cruelty, in the professed "ministers of God," kindness, affection, and love, will win a way to the heart, even though the intellect be not convinced; and if the logic fail to affect our judgment, we lend a willing ear to all who exhibit the spirit of Christ. Much more, when both the spirit and the truth of Jesus Christ are combined, the most happy results may be anticipated. ¶ *By the Holy Ghost*. "Paul here evidently refers not to the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, but he is referring to the spirit which he and his fellow-ministers manifested, and means here, doubtless, that they evinced such feelings as the Holy Spirit produced in the children of God." — *Barnes*. ¶ *By love unfeigned*. Sincere

by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

love. The same word is translated *without dissimulation*, Rom. xii. 9, and *without hypocrisy*, Jas. iii. 17. Not a hypocritical pretence of love, like that which characterized the false teachers, who had some self-interested object to accomplish; but an honest, sincere, fervent love, which induced him to desire their welfare; which prompted him to labor and to suffer, that he might impart spiritual blessings to them; which caused him to desire *them* as trophies of divine grace, rather than their possessions as a perquisite for himself. Ch. xii. 14.

7. *By the word of truth*. "The word of simple, unadulterated truth, as in ch. ii. 17; iv. 2." — *Stanley*. The truth, as revealed through Jesus Christ, without admixture of Jewish traditions or heathen philosophy; the truth which Jesus came to testify. John xviii. 37. 1 Cor. ii. 1. ¶ *By the power of God*. Some understand this exclusively of the miraculous power which God granted to the apostles, and to Paul quite as abundantly as to any other. But it seems rather to indicate the divine power generally, by which the truth was made effectual to the conversion of men, not excluding miraculous gifts, but including more than these. See note on Rom. xv. 19. ¶ *By the armor of righteousness, &c.* By the complete armor of righteousness. The metaphor is military, and is largely amplified in Eph. vi. 14-17. The idea is, that a conscientious adherence to duty, with a firm reliance on God, love to God and obedience to his commandments, love to mankind, exemplified by steady and earnest efforts to promote their welfare, in short, holiness of heart and conduct, both afforded a complete defence against all opposition, and approved Paul and his associates as "the ministers of God." "The armor with which they met their foes, and which constituted their entire panoply, was a holy life. With that they met all

8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;

the assaults of their enemies; with that, all slander and persecution. That was their defence, and by that they hoped and expected to achieve their conquests."—*Barnes*.

8. *By honor and dishonor.* "Through honor and through infamy."—*Conybeare*. "Through honor and dishonor. Honor and dishonor are that respect and disgrace which are occasioned to men by particular actions. But bad and good fame arise from men's general conduct. The apostle showed a remarkable example of proper behavior under honor at Lystra, when the priest of Jupiter was going to offer sacrifice to him as a god; and afterwards under dishonor, when the Lystrians, at the instigation of the Jews, stoned him as a magician, and left him for dead on the street."—*Macknight*. The same writer paraphrases the whole verse thus:—"Through a proper behavior when we received honor and dishonor; through bearing bad fame without being dejected, and good fame without being elated; as reckoned deceivers, yet showing ourselves true ministers of Christ." ¶ *By evil report and good report.* Rather, *through evil and good report.* Through reproach and praise. Paul had abundantly experienced both. His friends had proclaimed his faithfulness and success, in glowing terms. The Jews had denounced him as an apostate; the philosophers had derided him as a madman and a fanatic; and the Judaizing Christians had represented him as an unauthorized apostle, unqualified to preach, and unworthy of full credence. Through all this he passed with an equable mind, neither elated by the praises of his friends, nor dejected under the denunciations of his enemies. Conscious that he was aided by divine power, he was humble before God, while honored by man; conscious that the same power was sufficient to sustain him and to enable him to triumph over all difficulties, he was confident in

9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed;

God, while his name was cast out as evil by men. ¶ *As deceivers.* "Deceivers, a title, it is like, he had received from some of the opposite faction at Corinth. See ch. xii. 16."—*Locke*. "No doubt, this term had been applied to Paul and the other apostles, by their adversaries, the Pagan priests and the Jewish Rabbies; as it had formerly been done by the scribes and Pharisees to Jesus, Matt. xxvii. 63."—*Bloomfield*. This imputation he bore with a Christian spirit, and thus gave evidence that he was a true disciple of him, "who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 23. ¶ *And yet true.* "We are not deceivers and impostors. Though we are regarded as such, yet we show ourselves to be true and faithful ministers of Christ."—*Barnes*. By our forbearance and patience under this very abuse, we manifest our devotion to the truth of the gospel.

9. *As unknown, and yet well known.* This contrast has been variously interpreted. "As unknown by men, yet acknowledged by God."—*Conybeare*. "As strangers unknown, yet making ourselves well known by our good qualities."—*Macknight*. The same interpretation is substantially adopted by *Barnes*. The general idea running through the several contrasts, in ver. 8-10, however, is that the indignities and abuse which he suffered had their origin in the ill-will of his adversaries; while, on the other hand, he was sustained by divine power, and enabled both in word and deed, to approve himself as a true "minister of God." With this general idea the following interpretation better harmonizes, and is probably correct: "Unknown, that is, obscure, his real power not recognized, as in ch. x. 10; yet amongst true believers recognized fully, as in ch. iii. 2."—*Stanley*. Or,

10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making

more at large, thus: "This expression means not *mistaken*, but *unknown*; but how could this be made a ground of accusation? Probably it refers to the assertion of his enemies, that he was merely an inconsiderable teacher in the church; that Peter, John, and James, were of more importance. To this Paul replies, by pointing to his large acquaintance, that is, his extended labors, which had made him well known." — *Olshausen*. ¶ *As dying, and, behold, we live*. Constantly exposed to death, yet wonderfully preserved alive. The apostle often refers to the imminent hazard of life, in similar terms, ch. xi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 31. He may have had in his mind the conspiracy of the Jews against his life, recorded in Acts xxiii. 12–15; or their attempt to kill him at Lystra, Acts xiv. 19. ¶ *As chastened and not killed*. This chastening is understood by many to mean the discipline to which God subjected Paul and his associates; "the chastisements which God inflicted; the trials to which he subjected them." — *Barnes*. It is scarcely to be supposed that Paul would represent himself as being chastised by God on account of his faithful labors in the ministry. I think the paraphrase by *Hammond* is more reasonable: "Permitted by God to be afflicted and chastened, but not yet to be put to death, though of some of us it was verily purposed that we should. 1 Cor. xv. 32; 2 Cor. i. 8." That is, he permits us to suffer chastisement, or to be punished, by men, for what they regard as unlawful conduct; yet he hath not hitherto permitted them to destroy our lives. Yet even this does not, I think, fully express the apostle's meaning. The idea seems rather to be this: — In our manifold afflictions and persecutions, enemies and unbelievers suppose we are suffering the judgments of God, as malefactors; yet he preserves our lives, as might not be expected if we were as wicked as we have been represented. However men may regard their own afflictions, they

many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

are prone to consider the afflictions which others suffer, as punishment for sin. Thus when the barbarians saw the viper fasten itself on Paul's hand, "they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." Acts xxviii. 4. Thus also the prophet, when describing the rejection of the Messiah, represents the Jews as believing that the afflictions endured by our Lord in his labor of love were tokens of divine wrath: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Isa. liii. 4. The conclusion was wrong in both cases; for, by preserving Paul's life, and by raising his Son from the dead, God manifested his approval and love, not disapproval and wrath.

10. *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*. "The reflection in these words naturally arises out of the preceding. Under these afflictions and corrections, we seem to be suffering grief, and are thought the most unhappy of men; yet, in fact, we are rejoicing in the testimony of a good conscience, and in the consolations of divine grace." — *Bloomfield*. Doubtless, the apostle was grieved at the opposition he encountered. His Master and ours, when he was met by the bigoted enmity of the Jews, was "grieved for the hardness of their hearts," Mark iii. 5, and wept over their devoted city. Luke xix. 41. But, in this place, I think, the apostle speaks not of his actual sorrows, but of those which he was supposed to suffer. ¶ *As poor, yet making many rich*. Paul was actually destitute of worldly goods, yet he made others rich by abundantly communicating spiritual blessings. He is generally understood to refer here to this state of things. But it better comports with the style of the preceding contrasts, to understand him to mean, we are despised as poor, yet we make others rich. ¶ *As having nothing, yet possessing all things*. The apostle may refer to his

11 *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.*

12 *Ye are not straitened in us,*

actual poverty; yet more probably the reference is to what others thought and said of him in derision. We seem and are represented to be entirely destitute of all which can make life desirable; yet we truly possess all things, "in contentedness of mind, Phil. iv. 18; in the favor of that God who giveth all things richly to enjoy, 1 Tim. vi. 17; in Christ Jesus, who is all in all, Col. iii. 11, and in whom we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, Eph. i. 3; and in the promise to inherit all things." — *Whitby*. The true Christian, whatever his condition in respect to earthly goods, feels confident of an abundant provision for all his spiritual wants. Rom. viii. 32.

11. *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you.* I speak freely and fully, without concealment and without reservation. ¶ *Our heart is enlarged.* My affection for you is fervent, and all-embracing. Because I love you so ardently, I have spoken thus freely and plainly. "In the previous verses, the long train of digressions which had broken in upon the apostle's argument in ch. ii. 16, had been gradually drawing to a conclusion. The thought of the reconciliation with God, to which they were invited, ch. v. 19-21, awakens the thought of their reconciliation with him; and the impassioned description of his own sufferings, ver. 4-10, naturally prepares the way for throwing himself upon their sympathy. Here, accordingly, the long-suppressed feeling finds its vent. — With the loosing of his tongue, his heart opens also; that heart which was, as Chrysostom calls it, the heart of the world, opens to receive in its large capacities his thousand friends; whatever narrowness of affection, whatever check to the yearnings of soul between them might exist, was not on his part, but on theirs. The only reward which he claimed for his paternal tenderness was

but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

13 *Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as un-*

a greater openness from them, his spiritual children." — *Stanley*.

12. *Ye are not straitened in us, &c.* "There is no narrowness in my love, but the narrowness is in your own." — *Conybeare*. Ye are not straitened for room in my heart; its affection is broad enough to embrace all. There is no obstacle on my part to a perfect sympathy between us. ¶ *But ye are straitened in your own bowels.* In your own affections. The Greek word literally signifies *bowels*, or intestines, but it is figuratively used for "the inward parts, as in English the breast, the heart." It is here "put for the heart, soul, mind, the inner man." — *Robinson*. Thus we read of the yearning of the bowels, Gen. xliii. 30; bowels of mercies, Col. iii. 12; and bowels of compassion, 1 John iii. 17. The same figure of speech is occasionally used, even at the present day; and it was not unusual at the date of this epistle. The idea is, that their affections were not sufficiently broad and extensive; that they were confined by narrow bounds. "He had not received from them the demonstrations of attachment which he had a right to expect, and which was a fair and proportionate return for the love bestowed on them. Probably he refers to the fact that they had formed parties; had admitted false teachers; and had not received his instructions as implicitly and kindly as they ought to have done." — *Barnes*.

13. *Now for a recompense, &c.* As a suitable return for my love; as a proper acknowledgment of the services which have manifested my love to you. ¶ *I speak as unto my children.* By this affectionate appellation, he reminds them that he was instrumental in their conversion; that he was, in a certain sense, their spiritual father. See note on 1 Cor. iv. 15. ¶ *Be ye also enlarged.* "Let your hearts be opened in like manner." — *Conybeare*. Be

to my children,) be ye also enlarged.

14 Be ye not unequally yoked

convinced of the sincerity and fervency of my love, and let your love flow forth abundantly to me in like manner. See note on ver. 11. He asked not silver nor gold at their hands. All he required was, that they should appreciate the abundant manifestations of his love, and fervently love him in return.

14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.* The connection between this verse and the preceding is obscure. Some suppose it to be this: "Make me this return for my love. Love me also, and as a proof of your affection, be not improperly united with unbelievers." — *Barnes*. Others, thus: "From parental love, I give you the following advice," &c. — *Macknight*. Or thus: "By this pathetic appeal to their hearts, the apostle endeavors to draw their attention to some serious admonitions which he had to address to them." — *Bloomfield*. But others, and certainly with some show of reason, regard the exhortation which commences here, as one of those digressions in which Paul often indulged, or as independent of the context. "We now arrive at a remarkable dislocation of the argument. On the one hand, the passionate appeal to the Corinthians, which was begun in ver. 11-13, is continued without even an appearance of an interruption, in ch. vii. 2, where the words *make room for us* (receive us) are evidently the prolongation of the metaphor expressed in ver. 12, 13. On the other hand, the intervening passage, ver. 14—vii. 1, while it coheres perfectly with itself, has not the slightest connection with the immediate context either before or after. It relates, not to the apostle's dealings with the Corinthian church, or his opponents, but entirely to their connection with the heathen world, and, as would appear from the phrases used in ver. 16—vii. 1, especially to their contamination by the sensual rites and practices of heathenism." — *Stanley*. Almost as great a variety of

together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and

interpretation has been given of the text itself, as concerning its connection or want of connection with the context. Many have supposed that it was the principal object of the apostle to forbid intermarriage between Christians and the heathen, between believers and unbelievers. "But there is no reason for confining it to marriage. It doubtless includes that, but it may as well refer to any other intimate connection, or to intimate friendships, or to participation in their amusements or employments, as to marriage." — *Barnes*. Not, indeed, that they were bound to shun intercourse with unbelievers, altogether, or to treat them with discourtesy, coldness, or uncharitableness; but no such intimate connection should be had with them, as could be construed as an approval of their ungodliness. See note on 1 Cor. v. 10, 11. An interpretation of the text has been suggested, which, if true, exhibits a satisfactory connection with the preceding context. By unbelievers, Paul is understood to refer not to the heathen, but to the false teachers in the church, who had turned the hearts of the brethren from him to themselves, and to whom he desired they should not remain so firmly attached, but that they should rather return to their first love. See Gal. iv. 15-18. "It appears most probable to me, that the reason why Paul asserts so impressively the necessity of an absolute separation from unbelievers was in order to signify the danger incurred by his antagonists, ch. v. 12, if they continued in their present course. The apostle intentionally alludes to it in an indirect manner, because he still hoped for a favorable issue, and towards the extremest offenders would exercise the extremest forbearance. Thus interpreted, the passage stands in strictest connection alike with what precedes and follows. It will of course be evident that according to the declaration of Paul in 1 Cor. v. 10, the fellowship here

what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part

forbidden does not apply to every form of association or living together, but to laboring together for one end. Now of laboring with the Gentiles no party in Corinth had thought; the heathen tendencies which, according to the first epistle, still prevailed in that church, could not certainly have given occasion to so emphatic a diatribe; but undoubtedly the enmity of Paul's adversaries had arisen to so great a height as to render it doubtful whether it would be possible to labor with them for any length of time; that is, to acknowledge them as members of the church for whose destruction they toiled. This was to be indirectly brought before their minds, and for that reason Paul expresses the necessity of separating opposites in the strongest terms. If the adversaries were not already children of the devil, they were decidedly on the way to become such."—*Olshausen*. ¶ *For what fellowship, &c.* The impropriety of being unequally yoked, or discordantly associated with opposers of Christianity, is illustrated by a series of examples. There could be no more true fellowship or community of feeling and object between them, than between righteousness and unrighteousness, or holiness and sinfulness. ¶ *And what communion, &c.* Light and darkness have nothing in common. The presence of the one necessarily implies the absence of the other. Light is frequently used as the emblem of truth, virtue, holiness; and darkness, of falsehood, vice, and impurity. Between these, there is nothing in common. They cannot unite; but one displaces the other.

15. *And what concord hath Christ with Belial?* Literally, what sympathy, or harmony of sound. The apostle here passes from abstractions to persons; from virtue and vice, sin and holiness, in the abstract, to their exemplification in the living form. "By Christ and Belial, the systems of

hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?

virtue and vice are, as it were, personified."—*Bloomfield*. "Belial is plainly Hebrew; it means *worthlessness*, and is always so used in a moral sense. A man or son of Belial, therefore, is a wicked, worthless man; one resolved to endure no subjection; a rebel; a disobedient uncontrollable fellow."—*Calmet*. This writer supposes the Jews, in the apostle's day, used this word as synonymous with Satan. There is no evidence of this in the text. But if it be so, then the word is to be explained like Satan and Beelzebub, elsewhere. See notes on Matt. xii. 24, 26; Rom. xvi. 20. ¶ *Or what part, &c.* What "participation, fellowship."—*Robinson*. How can a Christian and an infidel, a believer and unbeliever, labor together in any moral cause? What fellowship have they, in desire or purpose? They are unequal yoke-fellows, and ought not to be joined together.

16. *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?* The Greek word used here "signifies properly a putting together. It should be here rendered, not concord, or agreement, but community, or connection. What has a (not *the*) temple to do with idols?"—*Bloomfield*. It is supposed by *Macknight*, that the apostle alludes here to 1 Sam. v. 2-4, as an example "that the temple of God and the temple of idols cannot stand together." They are devoted to different purposes. "Nothing could appear more abominable to a Jew, than an idol in the temple of God; here there could be no agreement; the worship of the two is wholly incompatible. An idolater never worships the true God; a Christian never worships an idol. If ye join in idolatrous rites, it is impossible that ye should be Christians."—*Clarke*. This remark perhaps should be qualified somewhat. See note on Acts xvii. 23. ¶ *For ye are the temple of the living God.* And of course should be separate from idols. For the

for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said; I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

sense in which Paul styles Christians the temple of God, see note on 1 Cor. iii. 16. This "may, however, be understood of the whole Christian church, considered as a temple, as in Eph. ii. 20, 21. The epithet *living* is applied to Jehovah, as denoting a real and existing Being, in opposition to the *pretended* gods of the heathens, which were but stocks and stones." — *Bloomfield*. ¶ *As God hath said*. The following words are quoted, with some variations, from sundry places in the Old Testament, and are here grouped together in reference to the particular subject of exhortation. ¶ *I will dwell in them, and walk with them*. See Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. God dwelt among the Jews, and manifested his presence by visible tokens; he walked with them also, and defended them from their enemies. To Christians he has promised the influence of his Spirit in their hearts, defending them against the assaults of temptation and saving them from sin. ¶ *And I will be their God, &c.* See Jer. xxxi. 33. "This is certainly as true of Christians as it was of the Jews, and Paul has not departed from the spirit of the promise in applying it to the Christian character. His object in quoting these passages is, to impress on Christians the solemnity and importance of the truth, that God dwelt among them and with them; that they were under his care and protection; that they belonged to him, and that they therefore should be separate from the world." — *Barnes*. Doubtless, Christians are exhorted to keep themselves separate from sinners, and undefiled. But it should not be forgotten that the promise contemplates a time when this precaution shall no longer be necessary, when no sinners will be found, when all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest. This promise, Jer. xxxi. 31-34, is quoted and illustrated in

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Heb. vii. 8-12. But we see not yet the full extension of that knowledge, nor the entire subjection of mankind to Christ, Heb. ii. 8, 9; and until that blessed consummation, believers should avoid contamination from unbelievers. But the God and Father of our spirits hath sent his Son, to bear witness to the truth, to reveal his grace, and to save his people from their sins. Having given his Son, he will freely give all things, Rom. viii. 12; and, in the spirit of the promise, he will be the God of all the souls he hath made, and they shall be his people.

17. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, &c.* See Isa. lii. 11. The application of this language by the apostle may be expressed thus: Abstain from a close connection with unbelievers, or false teachers; come out from them, or separate yourselves from their companionship and influence; have no connection with their idolatrous or other vicious practices, lest ye be defiled. "It may be doubted whether *touch not the unclean thing* should be taken figuratively, of intercourse with Pagans, or literally, of abstaining from the use of anything impure, as idol-meats. The latter view is preferable; but the former may be admitted as a secondary sense; for, as Grotius observes, the wiser Jews supposed the prohibition not to touch unclean animals meant of abstinence from society with idolaters." — *Bloomfield*. ¶ *And I will receive you*. The particular manner in which God receives the obedient is described in the succeeding words, which form a part of the same sentence.

18. *And will be a Father unto you, &c.* "These words are not found any where in the Old Testament. The passage which comes nearest to them is 2 Sam. vii. 14, where, speaking of David's seed, God said, 'I will be his Father and he shall be my Son.' Now

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

CHAPTER VII.

HAVING therefore these promises, dearly beloved,

as that prophecy, in its primary meaning, related to Christ and his people, see Heb. i. 5, the promises contained in it were spoken to believers of all nations." — *Macknight*. ¶ *And ye shall be my sons and my daughters.* "The introduction of *daughters*, from Isa. xliii. 6, is remarkable, as showing how strongly the universal extension of the divine blessings to every individual of the society rose in the apostle's mind." — *Stanley*. In a very important sense, God is the Father of all spirits, and all are his children. But to the believing and obedient, to those who yield to the influence of his Spirit, he is a Father in a peculiar sense; that is, he is realized to be a Father, and is trusted and loved as such. See note on Rom. viii. 15. Not that their obedience changes their relation to him, in his sight, but only in their own. He was, and is, and forever will be, a tender Father, who sent his Son that men might be reconciled to him, ch. v. 19, and that they might regard him with filial affection. What he undertakes, he will accomplish. In due time he will turn the hearts of all unto himself, and cause them to realize their true relationship and rejoice in him as a Father. ¶ *Saith the Lord Almighty.* The word rendered *Almighty* does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, except in the Apocalypse. It adds intensity to the assurance, that men are safe in the care and protection of their heavenly Father. He is able to bestow all the blessings which are prompted by his love. No obstacle can prevent the accomplishment of his purposes. No power whatever can wrest his children out of his hands. John x. 28, 29; Rom. viii. 31-39.

CHAPTER VII.

1. This verse properly belongs to the preceding chapter, and closes the digression commenced at the fourteenth

verse. At ver. 2, the apostle resumes the subject, which was broken off at ch. vi. 13. ¶ *Having therefore these promises.* Namely, the promises quoted in ch. vi. 16-18. ¶ *Let us cleanse ourselves, &c.* "That is, not only from the defilements of idol-meats and idolatrous society, but from every sort of defilement. By *filthiness of the flesh* are denoted the pollutions of the sensual appetites, as exhibiting the outward expression of sin by the body, in word or deed; by *filthiness of the spirit*, the pollutions of the passions, as shown in the inward workings of sin in the imagination and affections; a precept, as *Newcome* remarks, well suited to the dissolute manners of Corinth." — *Bloomfield*. ¶ *Perfecting holiness.* Bringing holiness to an end, or to a state of completion. This is to be understood with the necessary limitation growing out of human imperfection. Paul was fully conscious of his inability to attain absolute holiness in the present life. Rom. vii. 18-25. Such perfection he anticipated hereafter, as the gift of grace. Yet, even in this state of "vanity," he exerted himself to the utmost, to resist temptation, to forsake sin, and to cleave unto holiness; and this he exhorted his brethren to do likewise. As he who aims at the mid-day sun will throw his missile higher than if he aimed at a lower mark, so he who strives for perfect holiness may reasonably expect to attain higher excellence than if his aspirations were less noble. Even though the full height be not reached, the effort is noble, and brings a reward proportionate to its measure of success. ¶ *In the fear of God.* Out of respect to his authority and commandments; remembering that we are manifest in his sight, ch. v. 11; desiring his approval, ch. v. 9; vi. 4; relying always on him, humbly yet confidently, for aid in our exertions, through the influence of his Spirit.

let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted

2. *Receive us.* "Give me a favorable hearing." — *Conybear.* "Make room for us." — *Stanley.* Receive me to your hearts; embrace me in your affections. Let your hearts be sufficiently enlarged, to give me room. See ch. vi. 12, 13. "The apostle now makes a transition from what is doctrinal to what is personal and particular to himself, and resumes what he was saying at ch. vi. 13, in nearly the same words." — *Bloomfield.* ¶ *We have wronged no man.* It is supposed that Paul had been accused by his enemies of injuring some members of the church by the severity of his discipline; as, for example, in directing that the incestuous person should be excommunicated. In reply, he suggests that what he had done was necessary to the health of the body, and was not injurious to the diseased member, inasmuch as it was necessary to his own spiritual welfare. 1 Cor. v. 5. ¶ *We have corrupted no man.* I have corrupted no man's morals. I have made no man the worse by my preaching or by my conduct. I have taught no doctrine which countenances idolatry, licentiousness, or any other form of vice to which men are addicted. I have never, by my example, given encouragement to any man to live according to the flesh and not according to the spirit. ¶ *We have defrauded no man.* I have not obtained anything from you by fraud or deception. I have used no false pretences for the sake of gain. "I have coveted no man's silver or gold." Acts xx. 33. These several disavowals constitute an appeal to his brethren, that he deserved the love which he sought. As he had done so much for their good and nothing for their harm, as he had so constantly manifested his love, and had given no cause for suspicion of enmity, it was no more than a reason-

no man, we have defrauded no man.

3 I speak not *this* to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.

able request that he should ask their confidence and love in return. It is generally supposed that he intended also to administer an implied rebuke to the false teachers, who were not so free from blame. "As Locke observes, he insinuated in an oblique manner, that the false teacher had injured them, and done the other evils to them, which he here mentions." — *Macknight.* "No doubt there is a reference to what was done by the false teachers, who not only received a stipend for their office, but in other ways fleeced their devotees. See ch. xi. 20." — *Bloomfield.*

3. *I speak not this to condemn you.* Possibly there may be a reference here to the fact that Paul had not only not defrauded his brethren, but had not even received the support which was justly his due; meaning, that he does not speak of this short-coming on their part by way of reproach, see 1 Cor. ix. 15; but he probably speaks in a more general sense. I do not mention your lack of affection to me, in a spirit of fault-finding, nor for the purpose of reproaching or condemning you. My object is rather to excite your love to me, by reminding you how justly I deserve it. And even this I do, because I love you sincerely and fervently. ¶ *For I have said before.* Substantially, though not in the same words, ch. vi. 11, 12. ¶ *That ye are in our hearts.* That my heart embraces you in the spirit of love. ¶ *To die and live with you.* I am willing to labor for your good, while life lasts, if such be the will of God. I am willing even to sacrifice my life on your behalf, if by so doing I might advance your spiritual welfare. See Acts xx. 24.

4. *Great is my boldness of speech toward you.* I speak with confidence, as one friend to another. I feel that

4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

my love for you authorizes me to speak freely of your faults, as well as to commend you for your faith and obedience. I speak with perfect frankness, expecting my words to be fairly and properly appreciated. ¶ *Great is my glorying of you.* I not only confide in you that you will reciprocate my love, and receive my admonitions as manifestations of an earnest desire for your welfare, but I glory in the evidences which you have already given of your worthiness; I boast of you, as faithful and obedient disciples. Thus he boasted of their obedience to the directions in his first epistle, ver. 11; he had boasted also to Titus, ver. 14; and in Macedonia he had boasted of their Christian sympathy and abundant generosity. Ch. ix. 2-4. ¶ *I am filled with comfort.* Namely, by the evidence you have already given of your willingness to give heed to my admonitions. ¶ *I am exceeding joyful.* The word used here occurs only in Rom. v. 20, and denotes a superabundance. The joy which Paul experienced in view of the reformation at Corinth far exceeded the tribulation he had suffered. ¶ *In all our tribulation.* The reference here is probably not so much to the general trials and persecutions which beset him during his ministry, 1 Cor. iv. 9-13, and ch. iv. 8-12, as to the particular tribulation which he had recently endured, and to which he alludes in ch. ii. 4, 13, and again in ver. 5, growing out of his anxiety for the welfare of the Corinthian church. The intelligence received by Titus dispelled his fears, and filled him with superabounding joy. "It may be observed that in this and the next verse, for the first time in this epistle, the plural first person is exchanged for the singular, in speaking of himself, and from this time to the end the two are intermixed. He now pours forth his joy which had partially

burst out in ch. ii. 14, and vi. 11, 12, occasioned by the arrival of Titus; and sums up in a few words the various feelings which have sprung out of it, and caused his long digressions." — *Stanley.*

5. *For when we were come into Macedonia.* See note on ch. ii. 13. ¶ *Our flesh had no rest.* "The best commentators are of opinion that *flesh* is here, as often in the New Testament, used for the *person*; meaning simply, 'we had no rest,' namely, from the persecutions of our unrelenting foes, the Jewish and heathen zealots." — *Bloomfield.* In what follows, however, it will be seen that Bloomfield suggests another interpretation which pleases him better. ¶ *But we were troubled on every side.* In every way; on all hands. These words are explanatory of the preceding. I had no rest because I was surrounded by so many troubles. The nature of these troubles is explained in the words immediately following. ¶ *Without were fightings.* The particular tumults and commotions are not described; but the history contained in the Acts of the Apostles clearly shows that, wherever he preached the gospel, Paul encountered opposition, and suffered persecution. His visit to Macedonia formed no exception to the general rule; for even there, it appears, were tumults and "fightings." ¶ *Within were fears.* Chiefly, it is generally supposed, in regard to the effect which his first Epistle might produce at Corinth. This caused his great anxiety for the return of Titus, that he might learn whether his labor in that city had been altogether vain. "The sense is, externally, that is, in our body, we were exposed to opposition and violence; internally, in our mind, to anxieties and fears, namely, for the safety of the church at Corinth, lest it should be destroyed by heresies and dissensions." — *Bloomfield.*

6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

6. *Nevertheless, God that comforteth, &c.* Here as elsewhere, the apostle recognizes God as the original source of all blessings. He does not say, I was comforted by the coming of Titus, notwithstanding this was the means through which he received the comfort. But he looks higher, and regards both the interview with Titus, and the joy which resulted from it, as the fruit of divine goodness. Jas. i. 17. ¶ *By the coming of Titus.* Namely, to Macedonia, from Corinth. See note on ch. ii. 13. He was disappointed at not meeting Titus at Troas; he rejoiced to receive him at Macedonia.

7. *And not by his coming only.* Not merely by seeing a dear friend, concerning whose health and safety he had apprehensions, arising from his non-appearance at Troas when expected. Not merely by the opportunity again to hold Christian communion with a beloved brother. But, besides this, and chiefly, he rejoiced for another reason, which he immediately mentions. ¶ *But by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you.* The same circumstances which gave him so much consolation in his visit to you, afforded equal comfort to me when he communicated the joyful intelligence. He was relieved of anxiety, and filled with joy, when he witnessed your earnest desire and effort to conform to my instructions in the former epistle. The like effect was produced in my breast. The favorable account which he gave me concerning your spiritual welfare was the great cause of my rejoicing. ¶ *When he told us of your earnest desire.* Some commentators understand by this, the earnest desire of the Corinthian church to see the apostle; others give a different interpretation which I prefer, thus: "It seems to me that the connection requires us to understand it of their desire, their anxiety, to comply with his commands, and to reform the abuses which existed in the church, and which had given him so

7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest

much pain."—*Barnes.* ¶ *Your mourning.* Your sorrow for the disorders and the sinful practices which I formerly reprov'd. Your true mourning, your godly sorrow, which wrought genuine repentance. Ver. 9, 10. ¶ *Your fervent mind toward me.* "Greek, your zeal for me. It denotes that they evinc'd great ardor of attachment to him, and an earnest desire to comply with his wishes."—*Barnes.* Either this must be understood of only a part of the church, perhaps the majority, or it must be taken with some qualification. It appears elsewhere that the apostle apprehended there was still some lack of love to him in the church; and he exhorts his brethren to enlarge their hearts, that his love might be fully reciprocated. See note on ch. vi. 12. However this be, the degree of love which Titus had witness'd in them fill'd Paul's heart with joy, as it perhaps exceeded his expectations; at the least, it gave him assurance that they had not become his enemies because he had faithfully admonish'd and rebuked them, and it encouraged him to believe that their love would increase more and more as they should more fully understand his sincere desire and efforts to promote their welfare. ¶ *So that I rejoiced the more.* "More even than by the arrival of Titus."—*Stanley.* The coming of Titus, of itself, comforted me much; but the intelligence he brought gave me even more joy. In the one case, I was assured of the health and safety of a dearly-beloved friend; in the other, I was assured of the spiritual soundness and welfare of a church which I had plant'd with much labor, and watered with many tears. An additional reason for this excess of joy is intimated in the next verse. Titus had been faithful in word and deed since his conversion. The Corinthians had been led astray from the truth by their false teachers; and Paul had grievous fears that he might not be

desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not re-

able to stem the tide of corruption, and bring them to repentance. Hence, when he learned the favorable effect of his former epistle, and had assurance that his labor was not in vain, he rejoiced abundantly. See note on Luke xv. 7.

8. *For though I made you sorry, &c.* Namely, by the reproofs administered in his first epistle, on account of their dissensions, disorders, and vicious conduct. The first effect of such reproof is painful, both to him who gives, and to them who receive it. But when just in itself, and given and received in a becoming spirit, its effects are salutary, and pain is succeeded by pure happiness. Ver. 11. ¶ *I do not repent, though I did repent.* Repentance, as the word is here used, does not indicate consciousness of guilt, but simply regret or sorrow on account of an act, when it is feared that unhappy consequences may result from it. A man with the best intentions may perform an act, right and proper in itself, and is justified by his own conscience; yet it may result unfavorably, through an unforeseen combination of circumstances; in which case he regrets its performance, or, in the sense of the text, he repents, yet without consciousness of wrong-doing. "Here no more can be understood by his own repentance spoken of, but that uneasiness which a good man feels, not from the consciousness of having done wrong, but from a tenderness for others, and a fear lest that which, prompted by duty, he had said, should have too strong an effect upon them. This might have been the case, without any fault in him, as the consequence of a reproof depends much on the temper with which it is received." — *Campbell*, Diss. vi. p. iii. § 9. "It cannot be hence inferred, that the apostle had written with undue severity; still less need we stumble at the idea of repentance for what was done under the

pent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye

guidance of the Holy Spirit; for by this *repentance* we are only to understand that *misgiving* which a good man feels, not from the consciousness of having done wrong, but from tenderness for the feelings of others, and an apprehension lest his well-meant reproofs may have been too severe." — *Bloomfield*. ¶ *For I perceive, &c.* I perceive that my admonitions and reproofs had their intended effect: my object is accomplished; and my present rejoicing is without any misgivings. ¶ *But for a season.* Of temporary duration, succeeded by happy consequences. The idea is, your sorrow was temporary, but the benefit resulting from it will be permanent. On this principle, divine chastisements are the fruit of divine love, and administered in kindness. Heb. xii. 9–11.

9. *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, &c.* Paul did not delight in causing pain; he did not rejoice in the mere fact that others had been made sorry. His rejoicing was in the happy fruits of that pain and sorrow. A kind physician, who performs a painful but necessary operation, does not rejoice in the agony endured by the patient; but he does rejoice in the restoration to health which follows. The great Physician of souls causes temporary pain, in a similar spirit, delighting, not in the pain, but in its beneficial consequences. Lam. iii. 31–33. In like manner, Paul rejoiced not in the sorrow of the Corinthians, but in the reformation produced by it. ¶ *But that ye sorrowed unto repentance.* Or, unto reformation. "The word here rendered 'repentance' is a different word from that which, in ver. 8, is rendered 'I did repent,' and indicates a different state of mind. It properly means a change of mind or purpose. It denotes a change for the better; a change of mind that is durable and productive in its consequences; a change which amounts to a permanent

were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly

manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow worketh

reformation."—*Barnes*. For the distinction between these two words, see note on ver. 10. ¶ *After a godly manner*. "In such a way as God requires; with reference to his will and glory; that is, as Rosenmuller explains, arising from causes out of which he would have it arise, and producing effects such as he would approve."—*Bloomfield*. ¶ *That ye might receive damage by us in nothing*. Equivalent to, so that ye have received no damage, as commentators generally agree. The result of all your sorrow has been beneficial. My severity, though its first effects were painful, was made productive of happy consequences, by God's blessing, and you are not injured, but benefited.

10. *For godly sorrow worketh repentance*. See note on ver. 9, where similar phraseology occurs. ¶ *Repentance to salvation, not to be repented of*. Two Greek words, μετανοεω and μεταμελομαι, are uniformly translated *repent* in the New Testament, though of different signification. The word μετένοια, uniformly translated *repentance*, is derived from the former of these, and is the word used in the text. For its meaning, see what follows, and also note on ver. 9. I only remark here, that sorrow, even true and godly sorrow for sin, is not repentance, as is manifest, not only from the true import of the word, but from the language of the apostle. He surely does not intend to say that repentance worketh repentance. What he does say is, that "godly sorrow worketh repentance," while "the sorrow of the world worketh death." In the one case, sorrow differs as much from repentance, as in the other it differs from death. The relation of cause and effect is far different from identity. If the words were translated, as Campbell suggests, "godly sorrow worketh reformation," the meaning would be more plain. The other of these words, μεταμελομαι, does imply sorrow, but does not necessarily imply reforma-

tion, nor even consciousness of guilt or need of reformation. See note on ver. 9. Concerning the words μετανοεω and μεταμελομαι, both translated *repent*, "it has been observed by some, and I think, with reason, that the former denotes properly a change to the better; the latter, barely a change, whether it be to the better or to the worse; that the former marks a change of mind that is durable and productive of consequences; the latter expresses only an uneasy feeling of regret or sorrow for what is done, without regard either to duration or to effect; in fine, that the first may properly be translated into English, *I reform*; the second, *I repent*, in the familiar acceptance of the word.—Every one who reforms, repents; but every one who repents, does not reform. I use the words entirely according to the popular idiom, and not according to the definitions of theologians.—There is one passage in which this apostle has, in effect, employed both words, and in such a manner as clearly shows the difference; in the common version, 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.' There is a paranomasia here, or play upon the word *repent*, which is not in the original. As both words, μετανοεω and μεταμελομαι are uniformly translated by the same English words, this figure of speech could hardly have been avoided in the common version. Now, had the two words been also synonymous in Greek (as that trope, when it comes in the way, is often adopted by the same writers), it had been more natural to say μετάνοιαν, ἀμετανόητον. Whereas the change of the word plainly shows that, in the apostle's judgment, there would have been something incongruous in that expression. In the first word, μετάνοιαν is expressed the effect of godly sorrow, which is reformation, a duty required by our religion as necessary to salvation. In the other, ἀμεταμελητον, there is no allusion to a further reformation,

repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

but to a further change, it being only meant to say, that the reformation effected is such as shall never be regretted, never repented of. As into the import of this word there enters no consideration of goodness or badness, but barely of change, from whatever motive or cause, the word *αμεταμελητος* comes to signify steady, immutable, irrevocable."—*Campbell*, Diss. VI. Pt. iii. §§ 1, 2, 9. ¶ *But the sorrow of the world.* The opposite of godly sorrow. ¶ *Worketh death.* The opposite of life, here styled salvation, that is, a present deliverance from the thraldom of sin. See note on John v. 24. "The sorrow of the world, which deplores sin only on account of its unpleasant consequences, has no life in it; it rather destroys the life which may exist, by plunging the sinner into despair."—*Olshausen*.

11. *For behold this self-same thing, &c.* The original is more perspicuously rendered, "Consider what was wrought among yourselves when you were grieved with a godly sorrow."—*Conybeare*. "For see, now, this very circumstance of your having sorrowed," &c.—*Bloomfield*. In this verse the apostle describes the particular effects of their godly sorrow, which effects he had previously styled, in general terms, "repentance unto salvation, not be repented of," ver. 10, or a thorough reformation. ¶ *What carefulness is wrought in you.* The same word *σπουδή* is translated *care* in ver. 12. It originally denotes "speed, haste, as manifested in earnestness, diligence, zeal," and then "diligence, earnest effort, forwardness."—*Robinson*. It here denotes the readiness or forwardness of the Corinthians to comply with the admonitions of the apostle, and to reform the disorders and evil practices which he had rebuked. ¶ *Yea, what clearing of yourselves.* Literally, what apology. "Yea, apologizing to Titus for your conduct."—*Macknight*. The sincere part of the church doubtless stated to Titus all the mitigating cir-

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it

cumstances in the case, showing that, although corruption existed in the church, it was not wholly corrupt, and also explained the reason why the proper discipline had been delayed. ¶ *Yea, what indignation.* Namely, against those whose sins had brought disgrace upon the whole church, and against the sin itself, whose enormity they now fully realized. ¶ *Yea, what fear.* Some understand this, as fear of Paul's displeasure; others, as fear that they should fail to make a thorough extermination of the evil. Either gives a good sense. ¶ *Yea, what vehement desire.* Literally, what zeal. What an earnest desire to purify the church from all its corruptions. They entered upon the work heartily and energetically. ¶ *Yea, what revenge.* "What revenge against yourselves, for having been so misled."—*Locke*. More probably, the apostle refers to the punishment inflicted by the church on offenders; see ch. ii. 6. This particular matter of discipline is referred to again in ver. 12, and was fresh in the writer's mind. "Yea, punishment of the offender whose wickedness ye had tolerated."—*Macknight*. ¶ *In all things, &c.* "The sense of this is, you have entirely acquitted yourselves of blame in this business. The apostle does not mean, that none of them had been to blame, or that the church had been free from fault, for a large part of his former epistle is occupied in reproving them for their faults in this business; but he means that by their zeal and their readiness to take away the cause of the complaint, they had removed all necessity of further blame, and had pursued such a course as entirely to meet his approbation. They had cleared themselves of any further blame in this business, and had become, so far as this was concerned, *clear*, or *pure*."—*Barnes*. This acquittal from blame, however, is to be understood with regard to the church generally, to the sound portion of it, which seems to have been a large

wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong,

majority, and not in regard to every individual; for, in the subsequent part of this epistle, sharp and severe rebukes are administered to some, who persisted in crime, and in opposition to apostolic authority, ch., x., xi., xii.

12. *Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, &c.* In this verse, the apostle calls attention to the fact, that his object in the former epistle was general, rather than special; that he had regard to the welfare of the whole church; and that he rebuked them because he loved them. ¶ *Not for his cause that had done the wrong.* The incestuous person, 1 Cor. v. 1. ¶ *Not for his cause that had suffered wrong.* The father of the incestuous person, whose wife had been unlawfully taken. It would thus seem that the guilty man took his father's wife, while the father was still living. ¶ *But that our care for you, &c.* But that you might have full proof of my love, and my readiness and earnest efforts to promote your spiritual welfare. That is, the punishment of a single offender, or restitution to a single person who has suffered wrong, was not my main or principal inducement to write to you. I mentioned this case as an example of the corruption which had infested the church. But it was a general purification which I desired to accomplish. And though I directed the punishment of this individual, it was not so much from regard to the parties immediately interested, as from a regard to the welfare of the whole church, that it might not become further infested by this gross vice. As he had referred in ver. 11 to their

nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

obedience to his directions in this particular case, it is not improbable that he intended here also to remind them that this was not the only evil which he had formerly rebuked, but that their idolatrous and other disorderly and vicious practices also required amendment; and that he had warned and admonished them in regard to all these, that his earnest regard for them might be fully manifest.

13. *Therefore we were comforted in in your comfort.* Paul rejoiced, or was comforted, not only because a reformation had been wrought in the Corinthian church, but because of the comfort and peace which they enjoyed, as its natural consequences. The fruit of their former corrupt thoughts and practices was death, or misery; the fruit of reformation was life, or happiness. Rom. vi. 21-23. Paul had that spirit of Christian sympathy, which caused him to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Rom. xii. 15. He had heretofore suffered "much affliction and anguish of heart," on account of their misconduct and its unhappy consequences, and had rebuked them "with many tears," ch. ii. 4; he now rejoiced abundantly, both in their reformation and in the *comfort* which they derived from it. ¶ *And exceedingly the more we joyed, &c.* The joy of Titus increased my joy. His manifest satisfaction that your reformation is genuine, his sympathetic communion in that spiritual peace and comfort which filled your hearts as the fruit of purification, makes me rejoice the more. This is an emphatic repetition of what is said in ver. 6, 7.

14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

15 And his inward affection

is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

16 I rejoyce therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

14. *For if I have boasted anything to him, &c.* It would seem that Paul had expressed his belief to Titus, that the Corinthians would listen to his exhortations, and obey his injunctions; that they would disregard the false teachers, and acknowledge him as their spiritual father; 1 Cor. iv. 15; that they would forsake their evil ways, and walk according to the precepts of the gospel. Doubtless he had many misgivings; he feared the corruption was too extensive and deeply-seated to be arrested. Yet he seems to have spoken encouragingly to Titus, when he sent him to Corinth; and now he was *not ashamed*. He had not the mortification of knowing that he had overestimated and overstated their real desire to be true disciples of the Lord Jesus. All his hopes were gratified, and his expectations more than realized. ¶ *But as we spake all things to you in truth.* In all my communications to you, whether verbal or written, I have been open, sincere, and truthful, ch. i. 18-20; ii. 17; iv. 2. "It signifies everything, without exception, published by Paul in Corinth; and the whole statement is intended to portray him, in opposition to the calumnies of his adversaries, as a faithful preacher of the truth, whose confidence has not been put to shame by the better portion of the Corinthian church." — *Olshausen*. ¶ *Even so our boasting, &c.* This also has proved to be true, though I could not absolutely know the fact beforehand.

15. *And his inward affection, &c.* You have gained his affectionate regard by your good conduct. Not only do I fervently love you, but Titus also regards you with similar love. ¶ *The obedience of you all.* Namely, to my injunctions, and to the precepts of the gospel, as explained and enforced by

me. This is to be taken with the limitation mentioned in the note on ver. 11. ¶ *With fear and trembling, &c.* With lively apprehensions of the consequences of remaining in the disorderly and iniquitous condition which I had occasion to rebuke. "He saw what a fear there was of doing wrong, and what evidence there was, therefore, that you were solicitous to do right." — *Barnes*. This Christian disposition manifested by you, commended you to his confidence, and inspired in his heart a spirit of tender sympathy and true affection.

16. *I rejoyce therefore that I have confidence in you, &c.* Your conduct, as reported to me by Titus, your readiness to receive and obey my admonitions, your earnestness in purging out the corruptions of the church, your anxiety to conform, in all things, to the spirit and precepts of the gospel, have convinced me that I may rely on you with confidence, that your future conduct shall be worthy your vocation; and in that confidence I have additional joy. "The sense seems to be: I rejoyce that, from the experience I have had of you, I may in every thing feel confidence in your ready obedience to all my admonitions or suggestions." — *Bloomfield*. It has been observed, and it is certainly worthy of notice, that this commendation of the faithful brethren, and expression of confidence in them, or boldness toward them, furnish a very happy introduction to his plea, in the next chapter, for a generous contribution for "the poor saints at Jerusalem." He expresses, impliedly, his hope that they will verify his boasting in this particular, as well as in their general obedience. What he here implies, he expresses more plainly in ch. viii. 7, 24; ix. 1-5.

CHAPTER VIII.

MOREOVER, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of

CHAPTER VIII.

The object of this chapter was, to encourage a liberal contribution for the benefit of "the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." To this subject the apostle devoted much time. His heart was deeply engaged in it. In addition to its propriety and importance, as a matter of mere charity, or as a relief to those who were in distress, he probably thought that such aid, rendered by the Gentiles to the Jews, would have a tendency to soften the asperity of the latter towards the former, to break down the division wall between them, and to promote their union as a band of Christian brethren. He refers to this contribution in Rom. xv. 25-27, and 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4. See notes on Rom. xv. 25, 26. At his suggestion, it appears that the contribution had been commenced but not completed, before Titus left Corinth. What had occasioned the delay does not distinctly appear. The supposition is reasonable, that the opposition of the false teachers and their faction was one hindrance; and, growing out of that, the attention of the faithful had been much devoted to the acts of discipline and other measures necessary to the purification of the church, which interfered with their efforts to collect the desired sum. But whatever were the hindrances, he exhorts that the work may now go on to perfection; and he stimulates them to its performance, at the close of the preceding chapter.

1. *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit.* I inform you. The phrase was formerly common, but has now become obsolete. ¶ *Of the grace of God.* "There has been some doubt as to the sense of these words. It is, however, generally agreed, that *grace* here means, as often in this chapter and elsewhere, *gift* or *liberality*. But on of *God* difference of opinion exists. Some, as Hammond, Knatchbull, Pyle, Newcome, and Wakefield, take it as used,

God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2 How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of

by Hebraism, to denote *great*. That idiom, however, is of very limited application, and cannot have place here. The word must have its usual sense. And we may suppose the *grace* so termed, either, as it is generally understood, to suggest that it was God who had by his grace put into their hearts to bestow this charity, or rather, as that would involve some confusion of ideas, we may suppose the alms to be called God's, as being given for his sake, and in a certain sense given to him when given to his distressed servants." — *Bloomfield*. The same word doubtless has the meaning of *gift* in ver. 4, 6, 7, 19. But in this verse, as it has been well observed, "the more obvious and correct interpretation is that which is implied in the common version, that the phrase 'grace of God' means that God had bestowed on them the grace to give according to their ability in this cause." — *Barnes*. This is certainly the most natural interpretation, and subject to the fewest difficulties. ¶ *The churches of Macedonia.* See note on Acts xvi. 9. The principal churches in this province, in the apostolic period, were those at Philippi, Acts xvi. 12, at Thessalonica, Acts xvii. 1, and at Berea, Acts xvii. 10, 11. All these churches are commended for their liberality, ver. 2-5; but the Philippians seem to have been peculiarly distinguished by this grace. Phil. iv. 10, 15-18.

2. *How that in a great trial of affliction.* Under very unfavorable circumstances; when it might seem that they were scarcely able to provide for their own wants, and much less to contribute anything for the relief of others. The whole province of Macedonia, at this period, is represented by historians as in a state of great destitution and distress. Such also was the condition of all Greece, with almost the single exception of Corinth. War, rapine, and heavy taxation had reduced the people to poverty and distress. Their particu-

their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their*

lar "trial of affliction," however, is generally supposed to have been partly occasioned by persecution. "By mentioning the poverty of the Macedonians as the circumstance which enhanced their liberality, the apostle in a very delicate manner insinuated to the Corinthians, who were an opulent people, 1 Cor. iv. 8, that it was their duty to equal if not to exceed the Macedonians, in the greatness of their gift. See ver. 14. From 1 Thess. ii. 14 it appears that the Christians in Thessalonica had been spoiled of their goods. So also I think the Bereans must have been. Acts xvii. 13. In places of lesser note, the disciples may have been few in number, and not opulent."—*Macknight*. ¶ *The abundance of their joy*. The overflowing or superabundance of their joy. This may be understood to mean, that their joy appeared the greater in consequence of their distressed condition, or that it actually exceeded their distress; or, more probably, both ideas are here combined. In the hope of the gospel, they rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Compared with the magnitude of the blessings revealed in the gospel, their present afflictions were regarded as of little moment. Rom. viii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 17. ¶ *And their deep poverty*. Even of their poverty, they contributed freely. A striking instance of such liberality and its commendation, is found in Luke xxi. 2. The poor widow, who cast her "two mites" into the treasury was pronounced superior to those who of their abundance had contributed more, because "of her penury she cast in all the living that she had." ¶ *Abounded*. Their contribution was more abundant than could have been expected under the circumstances; more abundant even than Paul was willing to receive. Ver. 4. The abundance of their joy, notwithstanding their deep poverty, manifested itself in this abundant bene-

power *they were* willing of themselves;

4 Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellow-

faction. ¶ *Unto the riches of their liberality*. A Hebraism, equivalent to "rich liberality."

3. *For to their power*. To the extent of their ability. ¶ *I bear record*. Paul was well acquainted with their affairs. He had labored among them. He personally knew their poverty. He speaks, therefore, not from common report, but from actual knowledge. ¶ *Yea, and beyond their power*. Beyond what they were able to do without subjecting themselves to great inconvenience. The expression denotes that their liberality to others involved great self-denial. Their willingness exceeded their ability. ¶ *They were willing of themselves*. They needed no urging. When they knew the wants of their Jewish brethren, they contributed voluntarily. Unlike the unjust judge, who avenged the poor widow only "lest by her continual coming" she should weary him beyond endurance, Luke xviii. 2-5, they freely and of their own accord imparted of their substance more generously than strict duty required of them. See note on Rom. xv. 26.

4. *Praying us with much entreaty, &c.* Urging me to receive their offering, and to convey it to Jerusalem. Two ideas are suggested by these words: (1) That the contribution was voluntary, as in ver. 3, not wrung from them by the pertinacity of the apostle; and (2) That it was so far beyond what could reasonably have been expected of them, and involved so great inconvenience to themselves, that the apostle hesitated to receive it at their hands, until persuaded by "much entreaty." ¶ *That we would receive the gift*. The word here rendered *gift* is the same which is translated *grace* in ver. 1; but it is understood by almost all commentators to denote the *contribution* of the generous Macedonians. ¶ *And take upon us the fellowship of ministering to the saints*.

ship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so

Namely, "the poor saints which are at Jerusalem," Rom. xv 26, for whose relief the contribution was made. "The fellowship of ministering" may be understood as taking a part, or bearing a share, in this labor of love, by conveying to Judea what had been contributed in Macedonia. This he did in due time, and accomplished a service in which he had long taken the deepest interest. Acts xxiv. 17.

5. And *this they did*, not as we hoped. Not according to my expectation, which was moderate and proportionate to their ability, but altogether beyond my hope. ¶ *But first gave their own selves*, &c. They regarded themselves and all which they possessed as the Lord's, and were willing to relinquish all, if he required it. ¶ *And unto us by the will of God*. Regarding me as a "minister of God," ch. vi. 4, and authorized to speak in his name, they accepted my exhortation to contribute for the relief of others as a divine command, and cheerfully obeyed it. What is said in this verse "is not to be understood as of a spiritual yielding up, as if the meaning were, they first gave themselves internally and wholly to the Lord, and then as a consequence of this pure frame of mind, offered to the necessitous brethren of their possessions; but the giving themselves means here the bestowing everything, and retaining nothing for themselves. If the former were the correct sense of the words, a reference would certainly be made to it in that which follows, which is not the fact. The apostle rather takes for granted the entire yielding up of everything to the Lord as a matter of course. That, however, the gifts offered to the Lord were delivered over to him, the apostle here ascribes to the

he would also finish in you the same grace also.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

will of God, in order to make them observe that the idea had not originated with himself." — *Olshausen*.

6. *Insomuch that we desired Titus*, &c. The extraordinary and unexpected liberality of the Macedonians encouraged me to request Titus to complete among you the benevolent work which you had already commenced. He intimates that if the Corinthians should not contribute promptly and generously, they would compare unfavorably with their brethren of Macedonia, ver. 24; ix. 3. ¶ *The same grace also*. Or gift. See notes on ver. 1, 4. The word here denotes the contribution of which he had already spoken.

7. *Therefore as ye abound in every-thing*. See note on 1 Cor. i. 5. Paul was always as ready to commend the worthy as to rebuke the unworthy. His special object in this commendation, as well as his previous reference to the liberality of their poorer brethren, was to stimulate the Corinthians to the speedy and suitable accomplishment of the charitable work already commenced. And he exhorts them to abound in charity, even as they abounded in spiritual blessings. ¶ *In faith*. In the full belief of the gospel. ¶ *And utterance and knowledge*. See note on 1 Cor. i. 5. ¶ *And in all diligence*. Readiness to perform all known duty. Of this they had given satisfactory evidence, by yielding a ready obedience to his admonitions in the former epistle. See note on ch. vii. 11. ¶ *And in your love to us*. Their obedience had manifested their love also, and their regard for him as a true friend. There is no better test than obedience, of love to one who is authorized to command. John xiv. 15, 21. ¶ *See that ye abound in this*

8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

9 For ye know the grace of

our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

grace also. In the matter of this *gift.* Or we may understand the word in its more ordinary sense; see that ye abound in the grace of liberal charity. In either case, the idea is, let your generosity be as abundant as your faith, your utterance, knowledge, diligence, and love. You abound in those; abound also in this.

8. *I speak not by commandment, &c.* "The best commentators are agreed that the sense is: — I do not say this by way of command or injunction, as if I would dispose of your property authoritatively, for works of charity should be voluntary; but because of the alacrity of others, namely, the Macedonians, lest ye should be outstripped by them." — *Bloomfield.* ¶ *But by occasion of the forwardness of others.* Namely, of the Macedonians. The word here rendered *forwardness* is the same which is translated *diligence* in ver. 7. The readiness of others, their zeal in this work, their free and liberal contribution, prompts me to speak thus, lest you should fall behind your poorer brethren in generosity. ¶ *And to prove the sincerity of your love.* He had commended their love to him, ver. 7; he wishes to give them an opportunity to prove its sincerity. It may be observed, however, that he does not specify distinctly the object of their love, — whether himself, the church in general, the head of the church, or God, the supreme Head over all things. But it should be remembered that the sum of all human duty is comprehended in love to God and love to men, Matt. xxii. 36-40; and that no man truly loves God, who is destitute of love to men. 1 John iv. 7, 8, 20. And this love is to be manifested, not "in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." 1 John iii. 18. Sympathy with the distressed, generosity to the destitute, benevolence to God's children, furnish

the most satisfactory evidence of love either to God, or to men, or to both.

9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.* To stimulate them the more, he appeals, as often elsewhere, to the example of our Lord. The argument is similar to that in 1 John iv. 11. It is even more similar to that in John xiii. 12-17, where our Lord says, in reference to an act of humility and of kindness which he had performed, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." ¶ *That though he was rich, &c.* Some interpret, though he might have been rich, though riches were within his grasp, yet he voluntarily encountered poverty, not having a place to lay his head. It seems more probable to me, however, that the reference is to other riches than this world affords; namely, the glory which Jesus had with the Father before the world was. John xvii. 5. This glory he voluntarily relinquished, and endured all the privations and sufferings to which humanity is exposed, including literal poverty as to this world's goods. ¶ *That ye, through his poverty, might be rich.* Rich in faith, in love, and the hope of the blessings provided in the gospel. The spiritual riches enjoyed by men are derived through the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ; which ministry, agreeably to the divine purpose, was attended by outward poverty. This verse is parenthetical, and is designed to encourage and enforce the duty of self-denial for the good of others. The implied argument is, if he, at such cost, has communicated spiritual blessings to you, how can you better express your appreciation of the blessing and your thankfulness for it, than by a similar self-denial for the sake of communicating blessings to others?

10 And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was a*

readiness to will, so *there may* be a performance also out of that which ye have.

12 For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

10. *And herein I give my advice.* "So completely parenthetical had been this appeal to Christ's example, that he continues the sentence from ver. 8, as if nothing had intervened: — I give you no command, but only advice." — *Stanley*. ¶ *For this is expedient for you.* It will be for your own benefit, and the better for your reputation. A proper regard to consistency requires it at your hands. ¶ *Who have begun before.* Namely, to make a contribution for the Jewish Christians. ¶ *Not only to do.* Not merely to complete it at last, sluggishly, unwillingly, as if by constraint. ¶ *But also to be forward a year ago.* Or, "in the year which is past." — *Conybeare*. Ye not only began to do this, heretofore, but ye began willingly, spontaneously, cheerfully. It becomes you to complete the work in a like spirit. "The apostle's first letter, in which he mentioned the collection to the Corinthians, was sent to them by Titus in the end of the last year, that is, five or six months only before this letter was written. In this verse the apostle tacitly blamed the Corinthians, as having acted inconsistently, who, on receiving his letter in the end of the former year, not only began, but expressed great willingness to finish the collections, and afterwards grew cold and negligent in the affair." — *Macknight*.

11. *Now, therefore, perform, &c.* Carry out your original intention. ¶ *A readiness to will.* A free voluntary intention; a disposition to act promptly; a hearty desire to contribute liberally. ¶ *So there may be a performance also.* Let your actions correspond with your expressed intentions. Let the result correspond with the promise. Let your contribution be as free and generous as you at first

designed. ¶ *Out of that which ye have.* According to your ability. "According to your means." — *Conybeare*. "According to the means you possess." — *Stanley*. "It should be in proportion to your means." — *Barnes*.

12. *For if there be first a willing mind.* Or, *a readiness of mind*, as in ver. 11, 19, and Acts xvii. 11; or *forwardness*, as in ch. ix. 2, where the same word occurs. The willingness or readiness of obedience, in regard to any duty, constitutes its chief value. Reluctant generosity, if not an absolute contradiction in terms, is not such as indicates Christian sympathy. "God loveth a cheerful giver." Ch. ix. 7. ¶ *It is accepted.* "Doddridge, Rosenmuller, Macknight, and some others, apply this to the person, and render it, 'he is accepted,' but the more usual and the more natural interpretation is to apply it to the gift, *it is* accepted. God will approve of it, and will receive it favorably." — *Barnes*. The meaning of the verse is well expressed thus: "For if there be a willing mind, the gift is acceptable, when measured by the giver's power, and need not to go beyond." — *Conybeare*. ¶ *According to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* Every man's obligation is in proportion to his ability. The poor are not bound to contribute so much as the rich, for the relief of the distressed, or for the accomplishment of any other good object. When the poor widow cast into the treasury "two mites, which make a farthing," and "many that were rich cast in much," our Lord declared that she had done more worthily than the others; "for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Mark xii. 41-44. It is not so much the amount contributed,

13 For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened :

14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance

may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want ; that there may be equality :

as its proportion to the ability of the giver, which is the true test of liberality. The same rule applies to every duty required by the gospel. Our obligations are proportionate to our ability. This rule was announced by our Lord, Luke xii. 48: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." The rule is founded in equity and divine justice. God does not require of brutes what he requires of men, because he has not granted them equal ability. For the same reason, he does not require of men, while subject to vanity, the same degree of moral perfection which he requires of angels. The same distinction exists between infants and mature men, between the benighted heathen and them who enjoy the glorious light of the gospel. Of each and all, it is required according to their several ability, and not beyond it. This rule and its application are accurately and forcibly stated by *Barnes*: "Our love to him is to be in proportion to our ability, and not to be graduated by the ability of angels or other beings. Mark xii. 30. Here the obligation is limited by the ability, and the love is to be commensurate with the ability. So of repentance, faith, and of obedience in any form. None but a tyrant ever demands more than can be rendered; and to demand more is the appropriate description of a tyrant, and cannot appertain to the ever blessed God.—The service which *we* can render to God may not be equal to that which the angels render; but it may be equally appropriate to our condition and our powers, and may be equally acceptable to God." Such is the rule of equity, of universal application, as well as to the specific duty named in the text.

13. For *I mean* not that other men be eased. That they should contribute less than their share, according to their

ability. ¶ *And ye burdened.* That ye should be required to contribute beyond your ability. The apostle not only urges a liberal contribution from the Corinthians, but he is careful to guard against any suspicion that he desired to favor the Macedonian churches at their expense. He would give his adversaries no occasion to accuse him of partiality. Indeed he had already declared that the Macedonians had contributed so generously, even beyond their ability, that he hesitated to receive their offering, ver. 3, 4; but lest any possible suspicion should remain, he distinctly disavows the intention of imposing an unequal burden upon the Corinthians.

14. *But by an equality.* That the burden may be equal; that is, proportionate to your ability. ¶ *That now at this time, your abundance, &c.* The Corinthians, at this time, were rich; the Macedonians were poor. Although the latter, notwithstanding "their deep poverty," had given more than could have been expected, yet the amount of their contribution was necessarily small, compared with that which the Corinthians were abundantly able to bestow. The apostle, therefore, expresses the wish that, from their "abundance," the Corinthians should contribute as much more than an equal share of the desired total amount, as the contributions in Macedonia had fallen short of it. And he reminds them that earthly riches are fleeting and uncertain. Their relative condition might change. They might hereafter become poor, and their Macedonian brethren rich; in which case, the Macedonians ought to relieve their necessities, or bear more than an equal share in all common burdens. This, he assures them, is the true rule of equality; not that an equal amount should be contributed by each, but that the contribution should be proportionate to their respective ability. Some, however, interpret the equality

15 As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.

16 But thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest

care into the heart of Titus for you.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

as between the Corinthians and the Jews. See note on ver. 15.

15. *As it is written.* Exo. xvi. 18. This reference to the gathering of manna is probably for the purpose merely of illustration, not of proof. ¶ *He that had gathered much, &c.* "Probably every man gathered as much manna as he could, and when he brought it home and measured it by the *omer* (for this was the measure for each man's eating), if he had a surplus, it went to the supply of some other family, that had not been able to collect enough; the family being *large*, and the *time* in which the manna might be gathered, before the heat of the day, not being sufficient to collect a supply for so numerous a household, several of whom might be so confined as not to be able to collect for themselves. Thus there was an equality among the Israelites in reference to this thing; and in this light, these words of St. Paul lead us to view the passage. To apply this to the present case; the Corinthians, in the course of God's providence, had gathered more than was absolutely necessary for their own support; by giving the surplus to the persecuted and impoverished Christian Jews, there would be an equality. Both would then possess the *necessaries* of life, though still the one might have more property than the other."—*Clarke*. In this interpretation, most commentators substantially agree. Yet if the equality, mentioned in ver. 14, is rightly interpreted in the note, a slightly different application of the historical fact would seem necessary; namely, to the equitable sharing of the common work of distributing to the necessities of the poor.

16. *But thanks be to God.* As Paul uniformly recognized God as the "ultimate Author" of all good influences, as well as of all other blessings,

he here makes public acknowledgment of his gratitude to him for inspiring Titus with such earnestness in this particular matter. ¶ *Which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.* The same earnestness for your welfare, and for the relief of our suffering brethren in Judea, which I entertain, and which I have just expressed. Ver. 8-15.

17. *For indeed he accepted the exhortation.* He cheerfully complied with my exhortation to visit you, that he might give you assurance of my love and care for you, and also stimulate you to complete your contribution generously and speedily. His journey was undertaken, thus far, at my request. ¶ *But being more forward.* Very willing, even desirous. More ready to engage in the work than I had anticipated. Probably Paul had some apprehension that it might be difficult to complete the collection at Corinth, and feared that Titus might be unwilling to engage in such an unpromising work; unpromising, chiefly on account of the recent difficulties in the church, and the opposition to Paul which still rankled in the bosoms of certain false teachers and their followers. He expresses much joy on account of the unexpected forwardness of his beloved brother. ¶ *Of his own accord he went unto you.* Though he went upon my request, yet so great was his willingness, that he went voluntarily, and would have gone cheerfully even without any request on my part. His earnestness was equal to my own. Ver. 16.

18. *And we have sent with him the brother, &c.* Here and in ver. 22, the apostle says he has commissioned two faithful brethren to act with Titus in this mission of love. He does not call either of them by name, but speaks of them as well known, at least by reputation, to the brethren at Corinth.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches;

19 And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the

churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration* of your ready mind:

20 Avoiding this, that no man

Various conjectures have been offered as to their identity; but it is generally acknowledged to be impossible, at this distance of time, to determine the question with certainty. Nor is it of any practical importance that we should know their names. Their characters are sufficiently delineated by the apostle. From a comparison, however, of ver. 19 with Acts xxi. 29, it is a not improbable supposition that Trophimus may have been the brother named in this verse, who was chosen by the churches to accompany Paul to Jerusalem. Some, for similar reasons, conjecture that it was St. Luke. ¶ *Whose praise.* Whose good repute. ¶ *In the gospel.* Either, in preaching the gospel, or the faith of the gospel. ¶ *Throughout all the churches.* He was generally known and esteemed for his devotion to the gospel of Christ, throughout all the churches. Perhaps the reference may be particularly to the churches in Macedonia.

19. *But who was chosen of the church, &c.* Not only was his general reputation, as a faithful disciple of the Lord, well known through the churches, but he had an additional claim on the confidence of the Corinthians; he had been duly appointed by the churches, to assist in conveying their contributions to Jerusalem. He was selected on account of his trust-worthiness, and his fitness for the work to which he was specially appointed. ¶ *To travel with us with this grace.* Or, *gift.* To accompany me to Jerusalem, when I go to convey your joint gift to the poor brethren there. See note on ver. 20. ¶ *Which is administered by us.* Of which I have the charge and direction; or perhaps, rather, which I am to administer for the relief of the poor. "Which I have undertaken to administer." — *Conybeare.* ¶ *To the glory of the same Lord.* The manifes-

tation of a Christian disposition, and the performance of Christian duty, tended to the glory of their Master, to the advancement of his honor among men. Thus Jesus said to his disciples, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." John xv. 8. ¶ *And declaration of your ready mind.* Your gift, when administered by me, will be a convincing testimony of your generosity. Most critics, however, read "*our* ready mind," and understand it to refer to the earnestness of Paul himself in forwarding this work. "He thus states that there were two main purposes to be answered by the contribution: First, the glory of the Lord; as we should say, the *credit* which accrued to Christianity from the liberality of the Gentile churches to the Jewish Christians. Comp. Rom. xv. 16. Secondly, the proof of the apostle's zeal for the Jewish Christians. Comp. Gal. ii. 10." — *Stanley.*

20. *Avoiding this, that no man should blame us, &c.* "For I guarded myself against all suspicion which might be cast upon me." — *Conybeare.* Paul well knew the bitterness of his adversaries, and their willingness to bring against him a railing accusation. - He determined that they should "find no occasion" against him, in regard to this contribution. He would give them no opportunity to accuse him of dishonestly retaining any part of the gift for his personal advantage. Accordingly, he had associates appointed by the Macedonian churches, who should accompany him to Jerusalem as joint custodians of their contributions, ver. 19; and he had heretofore requested the Corinthian church to do likewise. 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4. "In order, therefore, to remove the slightest occasion for malicious accusations, Paul had caused several brethren to be selected, together with Titus, who were

should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent

to receive, and afterwards to deliver over, the bountiful collections which were the object of Paul's exhortation; his wisdom led him not only to act with conscious purity, but also to avoid all suspicious appearance in the eyes of men. This passage is finally a remarkable proof of the shameless audacity of some among the apostle's adversaries; for he is not speaking of bare possibilities; the precautionary measures taken by Paul prove that they had really ventured to cast a doubt upon his integrity."—*Olshausen*. They had questioned his sincerity and integrity in other respects; see note on ch. i. 12; it is not unreasonable to suppose that they had been equally ungenerous to him in this matter also. ¶ *In this abundance*. In the generous contribution expected from the Corinthians, added to the equally generous, though smaller, gift of the Macedonians.

21. *Providing for honest things, &c.* See note on Rom. xii. 17. "Being careful to do all things in a seemly manner."—*Conybeare*. "Premeditating things comely."—*Macknight*. The idea is, that Paul had taken care to manage the affair of the contribution in a manner not only acceptable to God, but void of the least appearance of impropriety in the sight of men. For this purpose, while he knew his honest intentions were manifest to the Searcher of hearts, he guarded against the suspicions of men, by having faithful and approved brethren associated with him, in charge of the contributions. Thus he took the most effectual means to avoid blame, ver. 20. His example, both in preserving his integrity and in protecting his

in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

23 Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow helper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of*, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

reputation, is worthy to be imitated by all Christians; especially by those who occupy stations of trust and responsibility.

22. *And we have sent with them our brother*. Generally supposed to have been also selected by some of the churches, for this purpose, but unknown to us by name. See note on ver. 18. ¶ *Whom we have oftentimes proved diligent, &c.* Or forward, as in ver. 17, where the same word occurs. He has often been tried, and always proved himself to be zealous in good works. ¶ *But now much more diligent*. Even more ready and zealous in this work, for the reason immediately stated. ¶ *Upon the great confidence which I have in you*. He is stimulated to extraordinary zeal by my confidence in your willingness to contribute liberally. It should be observed, however, that there is nothing in the Greek, answering to the words *I have*, which are supplied by the translators; and that many commentators, both ancient and modern, prefer to supply *he hath*, as it stands in the margin. If this be the true reading, then the meaning is, this brother is stimulated to extraordinary zeal by his confidence that you will receive him kindly, and cheerfully make a generous addition to the amount already contributed by other churches.

23. *If any inquire of Titus*. If any doubt exist as to his authority. If you, or others, desire any assurance in respect to him. ¶ *He is my partner, &c.* He is my companion, my associate, and fellow-laborer, in preaching the gospel, establishing churches, and nourishing them in the faith. See Tit. i. 2. ¶ *Or our brethren be inquired of*. Namely, those who are mentioned

24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

in ver. 18, 22. ¶ *They are the messengers of the churches.* Chosen by the churches for this special work, ver. 19. The phrase is literally "the *apostles* of the churches." Not technically, as the appellation is applied to the Twelve and to Paul, but properly, according to its literal meaning. See note on Matt. x. 2. These brethren were *sent forth* by the churches, to convey their gift to Jerusalem, together with such additions as they might obtain elsewhere. They were truly, though not technically, apostles of the churches. ¶ *And the glory of Christ.* Their character and conduct reflect honor upon their divine Master. Comp. Matt. v. 16; John xv. 8. It will be perceived that the translators supplied many words in this verse. They do not obscure the meaning, however; but it is more briefly expressed by *Conybeare*, thus:—"Concerning Titus, then (on the one hand), he is partner of my lot, and fellow-laborer with me for your good; concerning our brethren (on the other hand), they are ambassadors of the churches,—a manifestation of the glory of Christ."

24. *Wherefore.* Because they are thus commissioned, and because they are worthy of your unlimited confidence. ¶ *Show ye to them, and before the churches, &c.* Let the exhibition of your love be so conspicuous that it cannot be mistaken; that it may give full satisfaction to these messengers, and may be affirmed by them to their respective churches. ¶ *The proof of our love.* See note on ver. 8, where a similar expression occurs. The *proof* of love here required consisted in a generous response to the apostle's appeal for charity on behalf of their suffering brethren. Contribute so liberally, in proportion to your ability, that none shall have reason to doubt that the holy spirit of love dwells in your hearts. ¶ *And of our boasting on your behalf.* See ch. ix. 2, and note on ch. vii. 14. Prove, by your gener-

CHAPTER IX.

FOR as touching the ministering to the saints, it is

osity, that I have not overstated your willingness to aid in this labor of love. Let it be abundantly proved that my boasting was well founded, and that I did not misjudge your character, or promise on your behalf more than you are willing to perform. Do this, and neither you nor I shall have occasion to "be ashamed in this same confident boasting," ch. ix. 4.

CHAPTER IX.

Although a division of chapters has been made here, there is no change in the subject of discourse; this chapter, like the preceding, being devoted to the subject of a collection for the poor brethren in Judea. At the most, the only change perceptible here is, that the apostle resumes his exhortation, from which he had turned aside, for a moment, that he might commend the messengers whom he had sent to urge the completion of the desired contribution. ¶ *For as touching the ministering to the saints.* Concerning the general duty of relieving the distressed, and giving alms to the poor. See ch. viii.; Rom. xv. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1. ¶ *It is superfluous for me to write to you.* It is needless to urge this obligation, because you already realize and feel it. Yet, from what follows, it appears that the apostle judged it proper to add some further considerations, designed to direct their charitable disposition into this particular channel, as well as to induce them to act properly and generously. They may have been too much under the influence of that mutual jealousy which existed between the two branches of the church,—stronger, indeed, on the part of the Jews, yet manifest among the Gentiles; and hence have been less ready to contribute for the Jews than for their own kindred. But it was, partly at least, for the purpose of overcoming and destroying this jealousy, and of consolidating the whole church into

superfluous for me to write to you:

2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

one united and harmonious body, that Paul had undertaken this collection and urged it so zealously.

2. *For I know the forwardness of your mind.* Or, your readiness, your willingness. I know you have already commenced the work, ch. viii. 10; yet I have some apprehension it may not be properly completed. Ver. 3, 4. ¶ *For which I boast of you to them of Macedonia.* He had assured the Macedonians that their Corinthian brethren were engaged in making collections; and this he probably did, to encourage them in their own effort. ¶ *That Achaia.* The southern province of Greece, of which Corinth was the principal city. See note on Acts xviii. 12. Although there were other churches in this province, as at Cenchrea, Rom. xvi. 1, yet the reference is chiefly to that at Corinth, from which a large contribution was expected, on account of its superior wealth. ¶ *Was ready.* Some interpret this "has been preparing," and refer to the directions given in 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Others, perhaps more properly, think the apostle had supposed and said, that the work was nearly completed; presuming that his directions had been more carefully observed; that he learned his mistake by Titus; and that he was now anxious that his assurances to the Macedonians should be verified, without delay. ¶ *A year ago.* See note on ch. viii. 10. ¶ *And your zeal hath provoked very many.* Hath excited, or stimulated to emulation, Rom. x. 19, where the same English word is used, in a sense very different from that which is now ordinarily attached to it. The following observation is not unworthy of notice: "Rückert takes occasion from this passage to reproach the apostle with behavior at once insincere and

3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:

4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we

of bad example: namely, at ch. viii. Paul had represented to the Corinthians that the Macedonians abounded in liberality, and here he declares that the readiness of the Corinthians had stimulated the Macedonians to an exhibition of zeal. But as whole churches, and even entire provinces are the subject of remark, it would seem possible for the apostle to be perfectly consistent; Paul might hold forth the liberality of the well-intentioned Macedonians as an example to the Corinthians, and at the same time produce an effect on the less benevolently disposed Macedonians by a description of the kind feeling existing among the better Corinthian Christians." — *Olshausen.*

3. *Yet I have sent the brethren.* Namely, those who are mentioned in ch. viii. 18, 22, 23. ¶ *Lest our boasting of you.* Of your readiness to contribute, and the forwardness of the work. Ver. 2. ¶ *Should be in vain.* Should prove unfounded. Lest your failure to be ready with your contribution should put me to shame, ver. 4, by proving that I had been too confident in my expectations. ¶ *In this behalf.* In regard to this matter. ¶ *That, as I said, ye may be ready.* That what I have boasted of you may be literally verified. Ver. 2.

4. *Lest haply if they of Macedonia come, &c.* If any should accompany me from Macedonia to Corinth, and be disappointed in their expectations of finding you fully prepared. The apostle does not say absolutely that he should be thus accompanied; but the practice was common, Acts xv. 3; xvii. 15; xxviii. 15; and it was not unlikely that he might "be brought on his way thitherward" by some of the brethren. Rom. xv. 24. ¶ *We (that we say not ye) should be ashamed, &c.* If, after

say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you,

all his boasting in Macedonia, after all his assurances that "Achaia was ready a year ago," ver. 2, it should be found that the Corinthian church was not yet ready, Paul intimates that he should feel ashamed of his "confident boasting." He had boasted in good faith. He had received assurances that the Corinthians were willing to engage in this charitable work, and that they had actually commenced long ago. He had no reasonable cause to doubt that it was in a state of great forwardness, when he boasted in Macedonia. But he had recently heard that it was not progressing as it should. And he therefore sent special messengers, to urge its completion without delay, lest he should suffer mortification in the presence of brethren to whom he had boasted. He very delicately insinuates that the Corinthian brethren would also have cause for shame, if they should not be found ready. Although he declines to say they ought to be ashamed if they failed to justify his boasting, after all the encouragement they had given him, yet he evidently designs that they should so understand him. "This, though put in parenthetically, is probably the real cause of this appeal, as if throwing upon them the responsibility of defending him."—*Stanley*. It rested with them to show whether they deserved the praise which he had bestowed on them.

5. *Therefore I thought it necessary, &c.* Necessary, namely, in order to guard against a slackness or negligence which would be so mortifying. ¶ *That they would go before unto you.* That they should precede me and those who may accompany me from Macedonia. Ver. 4. ¶ *And make up beforehand your bounty.* That they should cause it to be fully prepared before my arrival. The word εὐλογία here rendered *bounty*, properly signifies eulogy, commendation; in a special sense, bless-

ing, or benediction; and figuratively, a favor conferred, gift, benefit, bounty. *Robinson*. In this last sense it is to be understood here, the reference being to the contribution which, while bountiful in respect to the givers, would be a blessing to the recipients. "εὐλογία is used in this section, as nowhere else in the New Testament, in the peculiar sense of a gift, like χάρις; the gift, or the spirit of giving, is regarded by the apostle both as in itself a gift and blessing of God, and as calling down the blessing of God upon him that gives. Comp. Acts xx. 35. The apostle immediately avails himself of the new word to carry on his argument, and with this opens a new subject, namely, the *freedom of spirit* in which the contribution should be made."—*Stanley*. ¶ *Whereof ye had notice before, &c.* See 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. This passage has been differently translated by competent critics. "Prepare before your *promised bounty*."—*Hawcis*. "Complete beforehand your *formerly announced gift*."—*Macknight*. "Arrange beforehand the completion of this bounty which you *before promised* to have in readiness."—*Conybeare*. ¶ *That the same might be ready as a matter of bounty.* The same word occurs again which is translated *bounty* in the former part of the verse, but with a slight change of meaning, indicating the "freedom of spirit," or a spirit of blessing, in the giver, manifested by the gift. "Your gift is called a blessing, or thanksgiving. Let it then be made as a free thank-offering from the abundance of the blessings which God has given, and not as a payment, which you covet, and which you grudge."—*Stanley*. Let your contribution be so prompt, as to manifest your willingness, your anxiety even, to relieve the distresses of your Jewish brethren. ¶ *And not as of covetousness.* Do not, by holding back your contributions until the last mo-

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6 But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

ment, give reason for the suspicion that you are covetous, and that you give, merely because your gifts are extorted from you by persistent importunity. True charity is spontaneous, and not sluggish. For the sake of their own reputation, the apostle desired his brethren to guard against any possible misapprehension. Ver. 4.

6. *But this I say.* I add what follows, lest you should suppose that the free bestowment of a mere pittance is sufficient. ¶ *He that soweth sparingly, &c.* The metaphor is drawn from agriculture. The farmer who sows less than the proper quantity of seed, must expect to reap a scanty crop. Nature will not be cheated. So in matters of charity. The proper amount is to be graduated by the ability of the giver and the need of the receiver, as compared with the need of others who have equal claims on the giver's bounty. The reward consists in the divine approval and in the testimony of a good conscience. See note on Matt. vi. 4. This, like all other divine rewards, is proportionate to the deed. He, therefore, who sows sparingly, or bestows in charity less than his own conscience determines to be right and proper, will also reap sparingly; his happiness will not be complete, because alloyed by the consciousness that he has not fully performed his duty. ¶ *And he which soweth bountifully, &c.* Liberally and plentifully. His reward shall be full and overflowing. Comp. Luke vi. 38. He feels that he has been a faithful steward of God's bounty, and has done what he could to relieve suffering humanity. And whether of his abundance he has given much, or, of his poverty, little, he has done what he could, and all that God requires. See note on ch. viii. 12

7. *Every man according as he pur-*

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

this verse is well paraphrased by *Macknight*:—"By recommending liberality, I mean that every one, on examining his own circumstances, according as he hath determined what to give, ought to give it, not with grief, nor by constraint, but with good will; for in matters of charity God loveth a cheerful giver." Having fairly and honestly estimated his ability to give, and the relative claim of any particular charity, every man should give freely, not grudgingly or as of constraint, the amount which his conscience adjudges to be suitable. The exhortation here refers not so much to the amount bestowed as to the spirit of the giver. ¶ *For God loveth a cheerful giver.* "And who does not? Valuable as any gift may be in itself, yet if it is forced and constrained, if it can be procured only after great importunity and persevering effort, who can esteem it as desirable? God desires the heart in every service. No service that is not cheerful and voluntary, none that does not arise from true love to him, can be acceptable in his sight. God loves it because it shows a heart like his own, a heart disposed to give cheerfully and do good on the largest scale possible; and because it shows a heart attached from principle to his service and cause." — *Barnes.*

8. *And God is able, &c.* Here, as usual, the apostle admonishes his brethren to trust confidently in God, who is able to bestow on them every needed blessing. In connection with vor. 10, the special trust he would inspire is in the divine ability to grant all needed temporal blessings. They need not fear that a reasonable and becoming liberality would reduce them to poverty; for God was able to "minister bread for food," and all things else necessary to their sustenance, as well as to fill their hearts with spir-

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

9 (As it is written, He hath

dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply

itual blessings. See Prov. xi. 24, 25. ¶ *All grace.* This is true as to spiritual blessings, which are the rich fruit of divine grace; but such is not the idea which the apostle would here impress on his brethren. The word here translated *grace*, "our translators have rendered by the word *benefit*, ch. i. 18, and ch. viii. 4, by the word *gift*. That it is used here to denote temporal gifts or blessings, is evident from the remaining part of the verse, and from the scope of the apostle's argument." — *Macknight.* ¶ *That ye, always having all sufficiency, &c.* The general idea in this verse is, You need not hesitate to be charitable, through fear of poverty; for God is able not only to bless you with a sufficiency for your own wants, but to furnish you the means of abundant generosity hereafter. Make a proper use of what he has already bestowed, and confidently trust in him for a continuance of divine favor.

9. *As it is written.* "So as to exemplify the saying in Ps. cxii. 9. The words are taken exactly from the LXX; and apparently with the same meaning, namely, that the 'man who fears God, Ps. cxii. 1, gives bountifully, and yet has more to give *always*,' the stress being thus laid on the last words, 'abides forever,' 'is never to be exhausted.'" — *Stanley.* In this application of the words quoted, most commentators substantially agree. ¶ *He hath dispersed abroad.* As the farmer scatters seed upon the fields, or as the man of wealth, in the East, was accustomed to scatter small coins among the expectant multitude. ¶ *His righteousness.* His liberality, his benevolent deeds. In this sense the word is often used; and it is generally understood to be so used here. "The Hebrews used the word righteousness to denote *alms*. The Psalmist's dec-

laration implies that, in the course of providence, the beneficent are often blessed with worldly prosperity." — *Macknight.* ¶ *Remaineth for ever.* Continues even to the end.

10. *Now he that ministereth seed to the sower.* This verse is in the form of a prayer or invocation. Paul has quoted the ancient promise; he prays that it may be abundantly verified in the case of his brethren. He prays, not only that their individual wants may be supplied, but that they may have ability to contribute liberally hereafter to the necessities of others. The allusion is to ver. 6. As God returns a plentiful harvest to him who soweth liberally, so that he has bread for food, and seed for future sowing, so may he bless you, in your present liberality, by supplying all your temporal wants, and granting you a surplus to be liberally devoted hereafter to similar benevolent purposes. "Now that God that furnisheth the liberal man (which giveth away that which he hath) with so much more, provide all necessaries for you, and make you the richer for your liberality, and increase unto you those fruits which are naturally the issue of liberality, a greater plenty for the future." — *Hammond.* ¶ *Minister bread for your food.* Provide for all your temporal wants. God alone can do this; unless he give the increase, we plant and water in vain. To him, therefore, should we look for the blessing, and render thanksgiving for its bestowment. ¶ *And multiply your seed sown.* Literally, grant you abundant harvests. Figuratively, make you to abound, even by your generous gifts to others; like seed sown upon the earth, so may your charitable benefactions tend to your own increase of power to do good. ¶ *And increase the fruits of your righteousness.* Make your

your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness:)

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

liberality productive of abundant good fruits. Or, by granting you temporal prosperity, may he enable you to contribute even more generously, and to diffuse the benefits of your benevolence more and more freely and extensively. Such is the usual interpretation of these words. A different interpretation is offered by *Macknight*, which has the merit of exhibiting a more natural connection between this verse and the next, though it assigns to the word righteousness a meaning which, I think, it has in no other place in the New Testament. He connects the two verses thus: — “And increase the produce of your righteousness. That ye may be enriched,” &c. His paraphrase is, “Now may God, who, by making the earth fruitful, supplieth seed to the sower and bread for his meat, while the crop is on the ground, supply seed to you, and multiply your seed sown, by making your fields fruitful, and increase the produce of your honest industry. That ye may be enriched,” &c. — He remarks, “Honest industry is fitly termed righteousness, because it is a righteous thing in the sight of God to labor for our own maintenance, and for the maintenance of those who cannot labor for themselves.”

11. *Being enriched in everything, &c.* This is usually interpreted as a declaration that the Corinthians already abounded in riches, and that they were so enriched in order that they might be bountiful. This may be the meaning; but *Macknight* regards it as a part of the prayer commenced in ver. 10. See note on ver. 10. *Conybeare* also thus regards it; he translates, “May you be enriched with all good things, and give them freely with singleness of mind.” If this construction be correct, an intimate connection between the two verses is

12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

13 While by the experiment of

obvious; the abundant ability to bestow alms, in this place, being the natural result and indeed the special object of the blessing invoked in ver. 10. If the common version and interpretation be correct, no such connection is easily perceived, and the prosperity invoked in ver. 10, and the prosperity represented here to be already enjoyed, seem entirely independent of each other. ¶ *To all bountifulness.* Or *liberality*, as in the margin. The idea is, that temporal riches, whether already possessed, or to be hereafter received, should be generously used in works of benevolence and charity. ¶ *Which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.* Your contributions, being conveyed by me and my associates to your distressed brethren, will be so acceptable, that their thanksgivings will ascend to God.

12. *For the administration of this service.* The conveyance and distribution of your liberal gifts. ¶ *Not only supplieth the want of the saints.* Namely, “the poor saints which are at Jerusalem,” Rom. xv. 26, for whose relief the contribution was urged. ¶ *But is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.* It will cause many to thank God for your liberality, so that your gift shall not only relieve distress, but occasion abundant thanksgivings. See note on ch. iv. 15. So constantly does the apostle recognize God as the original Author of all good, that he conceives of the Jewish Christians, relieved by the bounty of the Gentiles, as expressing gratitude to God for the supply of their wants, rather than confining their thankfulness to the instruments of his bounty.

13. *While by the experiment of this ministration.* “Through this experience of the service.” — *Stanley.* This verse is illustrative of the pre-

this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men* ;

ceding, and embraces nearly the same idea in different phraseology. The contribution afforded evidence of liberality. When the Jewish Christians received relief, they also received the evidence; and their thanksgivings and prayers flowed forth as a natural consequence. ¶ *They glorify God.* They acknowledge him as the source of your liberality, having influenced you by his spirit. ¶ *For your professed subjection, &c.* "While they praise God for the proof thus given of the obedience wherewith you have consented to the glad-tidings of Christ." — *Conybeare.* "They glorify God for your obedience to the confession of your faith, in regard to the gospel of Christ." — *Stanley.* The idea, somewhat obscurely expressed, seems to be this: They glorify God for the evidence afforded by your liberality, that you are the true disciples of him who went about doing good, and who made it a test of discipleship that men should "love one another" even as he had loved them. Acts x. 38; John xiii. 34, 35. Of such love, charity to the poor and distressed is one of the most satisfactory evidences. ¶ *And unto all men.* Unto all others, according to your ability and their necessity. The Jewish Christians were not the only persons who had claims on their liberality. They were to cherish equal love to others, and an equal willingness to relieve distress.

14. *And by their prayer for you.* Many commentators regard ver. 13 as parenthetical, and connect this verse directly with ver. 12. But whether we so regard ver. 13, or take it as illustrative merely, and embodying substantially the same idea in similar language, the result is nearly the same. In either case, the obvious idea is this: Your charitable donation will have a threefold effect; it will relieve the wants of your brethren; it will give them occasion to thank God

14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

for putting such a charitable disposition in your hearts; and it will excite their prayers to God on your behalf. Realizing your kindness to them, and regarding you as true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, they will invoke on you the choicest blessings of Heaven. ¶ *Which long after you.* Ardently desire to see you, and to hold Christian communion with you. The prayers of those who are thus united to you in affection will be offered on your behalf. ¶ *For the exceeding grace of God in you.* "On account of the favor which God has shown to you; the strength and power of the Christian principle manifesting itself in doing good to those whom you have never seen. The apostle supposes that the exercise of a charitable disposition is to be traced entirely to God. God is the author of all grace; he alone excites in us a disposition to do good to others." — *Barnes.* The apostle here intimates a crowning advantage which he expected would result from this contribution; namely, the removal of the jealousy which the Jews entertained towards the Gentiles, to the mutual disadvantage of both branches of the Christian church. He ardently hoped the Jews would be convinced by this exhibition of love that the Gentiles were genuine Christians, who had imbibed the spirit of their Master; that they would love their newly-acknowledged brethren, pray for them, and, like the apostles at an earlier period, "glorify God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts xi. 18.

15. *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.* That Jesus Christ, and the revelation of divine grace through him, is the richest gift which God hath bestowed on men, the full value of which is truly unspeakable, or beyond the power of human utterance, every Christian will readily admit. Yet,

CHAPTER X.

NOW I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and

though some commentators suppose Paul to refer to this gift here, such is not the general opinion. The great majority concur substantially, and in my judgment rightly, in this ancient interpretation: "Some, by this unspeakable gift, understand Christ himself, who is called the gift of God. John iv. 10. Others, the gospel, which is likewise an unspeakable gift. But the coherence with the former words seemeth rather to refer us to the exceeding grace of God in the Corinthians, mentioned in the verse immediately going before; so the plain meaning is, Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift, which he hath bestowed upon you, in filling you with his grace and stirring up your hearts in so liberal a manner to relieve the saints at Jerusalem, whereby so much glory redoundeth to God, and honor to our holy profession." — *Assemb. Annot.* "For all this goodness of God to you, and by you to others, his name be ever praised." — *Hammond.* The remarks of *Stanley*, who concurs in this interpretation, form a suitable close to the notes on this earnestly-desired "ministering to the saints," ver. 1. "It would seem as if, in these last four verses, the apostle threw himself forward into the time when at Jerusalem he should receive the thanks of the Jewish Christians for this contribution, and thereby witness the completion of the harmony between the Jewish and Gentile churches; a result for which he longed with an anxiety, of which not only these two chapters, but the whole of his last journey to Jerusalem, is a proof. Hence the impassioned thanksgiving for what else seems an inadequate occasion." The object was peculiarly dear to his heart; and he thanks God for the prospect and the means of its accomplishment.

CHAPTER X.

A remarkable change in the character of this Epistle occurs at this point;

gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you:

a change, both in style and in subject. Instead of generally using the first person plural to denote himself, as in the former chapters, the apostle almost uniformly, and sometimes very emphatically, uses the first person singular in what follows. The digressions, also, are less frequent and less extended than before. Commendation is succeeded by stern rebuke; and exhortation, by command and implied menace. He no longer commends what is praiseworthy, but denounces and condemns what is blameworthy. This change is generally accounted for by supposing him to address particularly the well-disposed portion of the church in the preceding chapters, and to grapple with his open enemies, the false teachers and their faction, in those which follow. The admonitions in the former chapters, in regard to divers faults which he desired should be amended, are also understood to be addressed to those who were not stubborn in their opposition, but who might be reclaimed by mild measures; or if he referred to the more obdurate, the time had not come for a direct and open attack upon them. That time has now arrived; and, in this and the two following chapters, he assails them with mingled sarcasm, irony, and severity. This chapter deals chiefly with the charge that he professed more courage in his letters than he exhibited in person. He assures his adversaries that, if they put him to the proof, by persisting in their opposition to him, they would find that he has both the courage and the power to act with decision and effect when he should visit Corinth. Ver. 1-11. He then, in a strain of keen sarcasm, under color of exculpating himself from blame, exhibits their pride, and boasting, and disposition to appropriate to themselves the credit which properly belonged to others. Ver. 12-16. The chapter is closed with a solemn admonition to glory only in the Lord; as none are actually

2 But I beseech *you*, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, where-

with I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

worthy of commendation, except such as the Lord approves. Ver. 17, 18.

1. *Now I Paul myself beseech you, &c.* The expression is emphatic, and is translated by *Macknight*, "Now I, the same Paul who, when present, forsooth, am humble among you, but when absent am bold toward you, beseech you by the mildness and clemency of Christ." The sentence, interrupted here, is completed in ver. 2. "I entreat you who are members of the church not to give me occasion for the exercise of severity in discipline. I have just expressed my confidence in the church in general, and my belief that you will act in accordance with the rules of the gospel. But I cannot thus speak of all. There are some among you who have spoken with contempt of my authority and my claims as an apostle. Of them I cannot speak in this manner, but instead of *commanding* them I *entreat* them not to give me occasion for the exercise of discipline."—*Barnes*. ¶ *By the meekness and gentleness of Christ.* Paul desired to imitate his Master. He desired to avoid severity. He preferred to win men by kindness, rather than to reclaim them "with a rod." 1 Cor. iv. 21. Yet he declares, in ver. 11, that he will not shrink from performing his duty, if a persistence in opposition shall require the exercise of severity. But he first entreats them to relieve him from the disagreeable necessity of exerting his power. "One would expect from the words that he was going to entreat them, by the example of Christ, to be forgiving and forbearing towards him; but the context shows the sense to be, 'You know, and I know, how meek and forbearing was Christ; do not provoke me into even an apparent deviation from that example, by a misconduct which will compel me to use severity.'"—*Stanley*. ¶ *Who in presence am base among you.* "Who am mean, forsooth, and lowly in outward presence, while I am among you."—*Conybeare*. It is generally

supposed that Paul was small in stature; and some understand him here to acknowledge himself destitute of a commanding appearance. The better opinion is, that his adversaries had represented him as comparatively destitute of power, and as timid in the exercise of that which he possessed. See ver. 10. ¶ *But being absent am bold toward you.* Namely, bold in writing, when at a distance. See ver. 10. Such was the charge of his adversaries; that he manifested much boldness, in his letters, but that he would not dare to administer severe discipline when he should visit them. In this place he does not absolutely admit or deny the truth of their charge, but, with a keen irony, addresses them in the language of entreaty: I, the same Paul, whom you accuse of timidity in your presence and of overbearing boldness when distant from you, beseech you not to give me occasion to prove myself to be as bold when present as when absent. Ver. 2. Though absent now, I meekly entreat, instead of boldly commanding. My boldness shall appear in due time.

2. *That I may not be bold, &c.* That I may not be constrained to exercise severity. Mingled with irony is a caution, equivalent to a menace. Do not brave my authority. Tempt me not beyond measure. My duty will assuredly be performed, both in commending well-doers, and in punishing evil-doers. It rests with you, whether "I shall come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness." 1 Cor. iv. 21. I beseech you, therefore, to spare me the pain of administering severe discipline, by a speedy reformation. ¶ *Against some which think of us, &c.* Who suppose, or at least who allege, that I am governed by improper motives. ¶ *As if we walked according to the flesh.* As if I were governed, in my conduct, by mere worldly principles; as if I were actuated by no higher and holier motive, than a regard to expediency. or to my

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh :

4 (For the weapons of our

warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds ;)

5 Casting down imaginations,

own personal ease, or fame, or advantage.

3. *For though we walk in the flesh.*

Though I am mortal, and subject to all the infirmities incident to mortality. Though I am still subject to vanity, and liable to all the imperfections inseparably connected with such a state. In short, though I do not claim absolute perfection, or entire freedom from the frailties of humanity. ¶ *We do not war after the flesh.* The contest in which I am engaged requires other than carnal weapons; it is to be carried to a successful issue, not by the means which worldly policy may suggest; it is, in fact, a contest against those very propensities and passions which reign in the flesh. See ver. 4, 5. The metaphor is military, and is continued through the next two verses.

4. *For the weapons of our warfare.*

The means by which I carry on the contest, and expect to obtain victory.

¶ *Are not carnal.* "Paul further asserts that, although he might walk in the flesh and in weakness, he assuredly warred not with the weapons belonging to the flesh, but with these which were divine and sufficiently mighty to overcome every thing contrary to God, and to bring all into obedience. The apostle here passes from the idea of what is sinful in *the flesh*, which is most prominent in ver. 2, to that of weakness, and describes himself as the champion of God, as not only defending himself, but attacking the strongholds of the wicked." — *Olshausen*. I use not such weapons as are employed by mere worldlings. I rely not on craft, or fraud, or brute force. I place no confidence in mere human wisdom or eloquence. All these are weak and ineffectual in the great warfare in which I am engaged. It has been suggested, not without plausibility, that the apostle designed, not only to disavow his own use of such weapons, but to insinuate that such were the weapons which his adversaries used. ¶ *But*

mighty through God. Or, *to God*, as in the margin. Some regard this as a Hebraism, importing very mighty, superlatively powerful. Others understand the apostle to mean that his weapons were rendered powerful by the divine agency; that they derived their power from God. The particular weapons, to which he refers, have been variously interpreted. Some regard them as the acts of discipline which he was empowered to execute:—"The instruments of our apostleship, the censures of the church, are not weak or contemptible, but such as have a divine force upon the conscience," &c. — *Hammond*. Others, as the miraculous powers which he possessed:—

"The powerful weapons of which the apostle speaks were the gifts of inspiration and miracles, the faculty of speaking all kinds of languages, and the ability of communicating miraculous power and spiritual gifts to others." — *Macknight*. Others, as the revealed truths of the gospel, accompanied by their proper fruit:—"Paul has not here specified the weapons on which he relied; but he had before specified them, ch. vi. 6, 7, so that there was no danger of mistake. The weapons were such as were furnished by truth and righteousness, and these were rendered mighty by the attending agency of God. The sense is, that God is the author of the doctrines which we preach, and that he attends them with the agency of his Spirit, and accompanies them to the hearts of men." — *Barnes*. Probably, however, the apostle does not refer to either of these "weapons" exclusively, but to all collectively. The warfare of which he speaks was waged not only against ignorance and pride and sinfulness generally, but against the false teachers and gross offenders in the Corinthian church in particular. While he encountered ignorance by the power of truth, pride by the humbling doctrines of the cross, and sinfulness by

and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge

the revealed law of righteousness, he also enforced his authority against opposers by the exhibition of miraculous powers, ch. xii. 12, and denounced the severity of discipline against such as should persist in their ungodliness. Ver. 6, 11; ch. xiii. 2, 10. All these were "the weapons of his warfare"; all were effectual, through the divine energy; and he would use one, or another, or all, as the circumstances of the contest might require.

5. *Casting down imaginations.* Or, *reasonings*, as in the margin. "Laying low proud reasonings." — *Haweis*. "Thereby can I overthrow the reasonings of the disputer." — *Conybear*. Paul is here understood to refer to the reasonings of the heathen philosophers and other opposers of Christianity, as in 1 Cor. i. 19-21, and also to the false teachers who claimed to be superior to Paul in rhetoric and eloquence. ¶ *And every high thing, &c.* The metaphor is still military. The word used here literally denotes a high place, an elevation, and is descriptive "of a proud adversary, under the figure of a lofty tower or fortress built up proudly by the enemy." — *Robinson*. The Greek philosophers were notoriously proud of their wisdom, and had great confidence in their reasonings. The Jews, if possible, were still more proud of their traditions, and of their fantastic interpretations of the divine oracles. Both were opposed to Christianity, and both were legitimate objects of attack by the apostle. Besides these open enemies, outside of the pale of the church, were those more dangerous, because concealed, enemies, the false teachers in the church, who both in theory and in practice, corrupted the word of God and the characters of men. See notes on ch. ii. 17; vii. 2. All these were to be overcome by some one or other of his weapons, the force of truth, the exhibition of miraculous power, or the severity of discipline, against those who were its proper subjects. ¶ *And bringing into captivity, &c.* "The figure here is evidently taken from military conquests. The

idea is, that all the strongholds of heathenism, and pride, and sin, would be demolished, and that when this was done, like throwing down the walls of a city or making a breach, all the plans and purposes of the soul, the reason, the imagination, and all the powers of the mind, would be subdued or led in triumph by the gospel, like the inhabitants of a captured city." — *Barnes*. This interpretation is doubtless correct as to the result of the general warfare in which Paul was engaged. But it is manifest from the whole context that he here refers to a special object of attack; namely, the false teachers and their faction in the church. They were to be disarmed and taken captive; they were to be brought "to the obedience of Christ," by heartily accepting the gospel and conforming their thoughts and conduct to its teachings. If any persisted in rebellion, they should at least be made to obey the authority of Christ, exercised through his apostle, as is distinctly intimated in the next verse. Concerning this subjection of human reason, and all its philosophical speculations, to the revealed truth of God, the remarks of *Olshausen* are worthy of serious consideration: — "The present passage can be understood with entire correctness only when we allow that Paul considered reason incapable of producing the truths of the gospel out of its own resources, but that we were rather to receive these truths in obedience of faith, and permit ourselves by no arts to be drawn aside from the simplicity of Christ. Ch. xi. 3. But, on the other hand, to extend the contents of this passage to the point that wisdom is also incapable of receiving and inwardly understanding the truths offered, is in decided contradiction with the frequent assertion of the apostle, that man is not wanting in the organ necessary to receive and perceive the divine things revealed to him by the spirit; see Rom. i. 19; he is simply not to desire to become his own oracle, his own God." Revealed truth, in short, is above the unaided reach of

of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

reason, but not incomprehensible by it, nor contradictory to it.

6. *And having in a readiness.* Being ready; being prepared. ¶ *To revenge all disobedience.* Rather, to avenge or to punish. Notwithstanding all insinuations to the contrary, notwithstanding all the taunts of my adversaries, that I am bold only when absent but timid when present, ver. 1, 4, be assured that I am fully prepared to act properly and decidedly, when the proper time shall arrive. If any persist in their disobedience, after all my exhortations and warnings, they shall have full proof that such as I am when absent such will I be when present, ver. 11; I will assuredly "use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction," ch. xiii. 10. It may be observed that the sharpest acts of discipline in the apostolic church, like the divine judgments, were designed, not for the destruction or permanent injury of the sufferer, but for his highest ultimate advantage. 1 Cor. v. 5; Heb. xii. 10, 11. ¶ *When your obedience is fulfilled.* The apostle intimates his intention to delay the adoption of extreme measures, until the well-disposed members of the church had full time to manifest their obedience, and to renew their allegiance to him. He would not have them suppose that he was about to inflict indiscriminate punishment on all who, for any reason, had wandered from the true path. The returning penitent he would welcome with joy. The obstinately impenitent he would punish. Stanley paraphrases thus: — "To effect all this, I wait only till I am assured of your submission, that I may not confound the innocent with the guilty, the dupes with the deceivers." Some have supposed the apostle waited for the reformation and obedi-

7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's.

ence of the many, in order that they should give effect to his punishment of the few. However true it may be, that a minister of Christ cannot now purify the church, by the expulsion of offenders, while the majority are opposed to such purification, the apostle acted under higher authority, and was invested with higher powers. Hence *Bloomfield* well rejects this interpretation, and says "for the punishment mentioned he needed not *their* aid. It should seem that he deferred exercising the supernatural power of inflicting judgments, entrusted to him by God, until, by giving time for repentance, he should have brought back as many as possible to obedience, who would help to keep the rest so; and thereby render it the less necessary to resort to severer measures."

7. *Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?* This question is manifestly addressed to the members of the church, some of whom had been deceived and led astray by the false teachers, who claimed to be superior to Paul in kindred, rank, personal appearance, learning, eloquence, or commendatory letters. Some of these claims are specially noticed and refuted in what follows. And in the "boasting" reluctantly indulged in by the apostle, in this and the two following chapters, allusion is constantly had to these claims, which form, as it were, the background of the picture. ¶ *If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's.* "He now proceeds to point out the various outward shows which the Corinthians regarded instead of inward realities. The first of those was the profession made by the false teachers of a closer connection with Christ than that enjoyed by St. Paul. That there were some at Corinth who prided themselves on a peculiar connection with Christ, appears from the enumera-

8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given

us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed :

tion of the party watchwords in 1 Cor. i. 12, amongst which is found, 'I am of Christ;' and that the false teachers whom he now attacks did so, may be inferred, although not so certainly, from the pretensions which they made to be 'ministers of Christ,' 'apostles of Christ,' ch. xi. 13, 23. From the fact that these false teachers were Judaizers, ch. xi. 22, it may also be inferred with great probability that the connection with Christ, on which they prided themselves, was the bond of union which they supposed themselves to have with him, through some earthly relationship, either as being Jews, or as having seen him, or been his companions in his lifetime, or as claiming some immediate connection with his kinsmen after the flesh, the brethren of the Lord."—*Stanley*. ¶ *Let him of himself think this again*. Since he relies so much on his powers of reasoning, let him settle the question in his own mind, without regard to my declaration, whether there is not as convincing evidence of my discipleship as of his, and of my intimate relations with Christ. ¶ *That, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's*. The reference seems not to ordinary discipleship, so much as to official relations, so to speak. The false teachers claimed to have peculiar authority to speak in the name of Christ, and denied that Paul had similar authority. That this is the particular reference here, appears from what follows: in which Paul asserts and offers evidence in proof that he was duly commissioned as an apostle of Jesus Christ, and clothed with all the powers appropriate to that office. The general idea is, that no one could exhibit stronger evidence than he could, of authority to speak in the name of Christ; and that even the false teachers would be constrained to acknowledge the fact, if they would fairly consider the evidence.

8. *For though I should boast somewhat more*. If I should assert even

higher claims to a commission from Christ than I have done heretofore. Concerning the word *boast*, a judicious writer has said, that "it is in his mouth a word of peculiar significance, because it is so reluctantly used; and because it is intended to express that assertion (if one may use a modern phrase of equivalent meaning) of his own *merits*, against which the general character of his teaching was especially aimed. But with that freedom which is characteristic of the apostolic writings generally, he is not afraid of a word, if it really seems to express his meaning; and therefore, though with many apologies, it occurs no less than sixteen times in the course of this section. As he overcomes his scruple to use the word, so also he overcomes his scruple to speak of himself. It is always with reference either to some position taken up by his opponents, or to some charge brought by them against himself."—*Stanley*. In this view of the case, his *boasting* is so far from appearing immodest or indelicate, that it seems rather extorted from him in self-defence, and necessary to the maintenance of his authority against the false teachers. ¶ *Of our authority*. Of my authority as an apostle, committed specially to me by Christ himself, to preach the gospel and to administer the government of the church. ¶ *Which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction*. Designed for building up the church, for securing the benefit, not the injury of its members. Even acts of severe discipline, necessary to the welfare of the whole church, are not designed for the destruction or final injury of offenders. See note on ver. 6. ¶ *I should not be ashamed*. I could substantiate any such claim by abundant evidence; both the power itself and the manner of its bestowment attest its divine origin; so that I should not be put to shame, if required to prove the truth of my *boasting*. Nor am I ashamed of the manner in which that

9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10 For *his* letters, say they,

are weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

power has been exercised, always for the benefit of men, never for their permanent injury. *Macknight* gives a somewhat different view of this phrase: — “I should not be ashamed by its falling me, when I try it on the disobedient among you.” That is, if I claim authority superior to that of the false teacher, involving power to punish him for his misconduct, it will not fail me when I attempt its exercise, and I shall not be disappointed nor made ashamed.

9. *That I may not seem, &c.* The construction here is somewhat obscure. Many regard ver. 10 as parenthetical, and suppose the apostle to mean, that I may not seem disposed to terrify you by mere words, let it be remembered that my deeds shall assuredly correspond with my words, ver. 9, 11. This appears more natural and proper, than to interpret, with some, “I have thus spoken of my authority, lest I should seem as if I would terrify you;” or, with others, “I will not boast further, lest I should seem,” &c. The apostle’s design evidently is, to guard against the suspicion that he was menacing more than he could make good. He had just asserted his authority, ver. 8; and he knew the disparaging charge of his adversaries, ver. 10. He declares, in ver. 11, that he will convince them that both the suspicion and the charge are unfounded. When he visits them, they shall have convincing evidence that he possesses the power of which he *boasts*, and that he is as ready and bold to exercise it as he is to speak of it.

10. *For his letters.* The reference is to his former epistle to the Corinthians, in which he had denounced their divisions and contentions, their idolatrous and incestuous practices, and other misconduct, and had directed that one, at least, of the more gross offenders should be excommunicated. He had also given a very distinct intimation that he would himself use the *rod*, when he next visited them,

unless they should reform. 1 Cor. iv. 21. Of this opistle, his adversaries said, tauntingly, it is “weighty and powerful,” but he dare not exhibit the same spirit and courage in our presence. From the plural form, we need not suppose that more than one epistle is intended. “Both the Greeks and Romans gave the name of *letters* to one letter.” — *Macknight*. ¶ *Say they.* Literally, *saith he*, as in the margin. Some one person, perhaps the principal leader of the faction, had uttered the words, and is particularly mentioned by the apostle. ¶ *Are weighty and powerful.* “Are written with authority and firmness.” — *Conybeare*. Whether his adversaries designed to acknowledge the true character of the epistle, or whether they uttered the words sneeringly and tauntingly, they unquestionably express the exact truth. Not only the first epistle to this church, but all his epistles, manifest extraordinary energy and boldness, and discuss the most momentous subjects. Some of the most important doctrines of the New Testament are those which are advocated and enforced by him; and his letters have done more to give shape to the theological doctrines of the Christian world than any other cause whatever. — “Take away Paul’s letters, and what a chasm would be made in the New Testament! What a chasm in the religious opinions and in the consolations of the Christian world!” — *Barnes*. ¶ *But his bodily presence is weak.* His personal appearance does not indicate energy or strength. Although this was charged by his adversaries, apparently with the design of disparaging his authority, and ridiculing his menaces, as if he were utterly unable to perform what he had so energetically described, yet it is generally supposed that it had some foundation in truth. “This seems plainly to refer to that which Chrysostom, Nicophorus, and Lucian, relate of St. Paul, ‘that his stature was low,

11 Let such a one think this, that, such as we are in word by

his body crooked, and his head bald,' and so he was literally low in person, ver. 1."—*Whitby*. Many expressions used by Paul, in his epistles, indicate that, although he may not have been in any respect deformed, he was by no means robust, or of a portly, commanding personal appearance. ¶ *And his speech contemptible*. Or, *despicable*. "This is supposed to have reference to the weak and shrill voice, and the defect in his enunciation, under which the apostle is said to have labored. But the speech may also refer to his *elocution*, including his *phraseology*; which was, we may suppose, not refined enough for the fastidious critics at Corinth."—*Bloomfield*. It will be remembered that Paul expressly disavowed the use of rhetorical arts and the graces of oratory, 1 Cor. ii. 1, 4; and very probably he failed to reach that elegance which the Greeks regarded as the standard of eloquence. And if he had, as some suppose, an impediment in his speech, it would increase his disadvantage, in addressing a fastidious audience. Yet if he be judged by the importance of the subjects discussed, his tact in their arrangement and in so presenting them as not unnecessarily to shock the prejudices of his hearers, the energy with which he enforced his arguments, his keen logic, his powerful appeals to the better feelings of humanity, and the effects produced by his preaching, he must be acknowledged as one of the most efficient and successful orators whom the world has known. It is not impossible, however, and the language in ver. 11 renders it probable, that this charge does not refer to Paul's beauty of person or elegance of speech, or the lack of either grace, but rather to his general deportment and conduct, as in ver. 1, 2. Thus understood, the charge would be, He writes boldly, indeed, when at a distance, but when he was with us, he was meek and humble in demands, and modest and even timid in his manner of speech. And thus it will be in future. When he comes here, he will not dare to attempt

the execution of his bold menaces. He will be awed in our presence, and will sink into insignificance. He will not venture to measure his strength with ours.

11. *Let such a one think this, &c.* Let the man who made this charge and all his abettors, the false teacher and his whole faction, beware. "Let them not flatter themselves that there will be any discrepancy between my words and my deeds. Let them feel that all which has been threatened will be certainly executed, unless there is repentance. Paul here designedly contradicts the charge which was made against him; and means to say that all that he had threatened in his letters would be certainly executed, unless there was reform."—*Barnes*. This is probably a correct exhibition of the apostle's meaning; and it certainly harmonizes better with the suggestion at the close of the note on ver. 10, than with the interpretation generally given of that verse. It is said, and in my judgment truly, that "Paul here designedly contradicts the charge which was made against him." He does contradict it, if the foregoing suggestion as to its character be correct; but the ordinary interpretation admits it to be substantially true. *Barnes* adds, indeed, "I think the evidence here is clear that Paul does not intend to admit what they said about his bodily presence to be true; and most probably all that has been recorded about his deformity is mere fable." While I agree that there is no satisfactory evidence that Paul was deformed in person, I much doubt whether there is any direct reference in this place to his bodily appearance, either by himself or by his adversaries. Moreover, it is not readily perceived how his language in this verse can be regarded as a reply to the charge in ver. 10, if that charge related to defects of body and imperfection of utterance. For aught which appears to the contrary, these would not render him the less likely to assert and maintain the apostolic

letters when we are absent, such *will we be* also in deed when we are present.

12 For we dare not make

authority which Christ had committed to him. Energy of will and devotion to duty do not altogether depend on vigor and comeliness of body, nor on fluency of utterance. But if the charge were, as has been suggested, that he talked boldly when no danger was near, but was timid and cowardly in presence of his adversaries, then his answer is directly to the purpose. I will convince them, says he, that they mistake my character. However bold my words may be when absent, my deeds shall be equally bold when present.

12. Critics have been much perplexed by the construction of this verse; and, as one or another mode of interpretation has been adopted, it has been made to express different ideas. What seems to me the most obvious meaning has been thus stated: "The thought which runs through the previous verses, 7-10, is that the power which he threatens to exercise, in ver. 1-6, was not an empty boast, but a reality. From this he passes on to contrast the reality of his claims with the emptiness of the claims of his adversaries; his own claims being grounded entirely on his own labors, theirs apparently on labors of which they appropriated the glory to themselves, but which were really his, ver. 12-18." — *Stanley*. ¶ *For we dare not make ourselves of the number.* I am not bold enough to put myself on a level with these. I am not bold enough to place myself in the same rank. The language is keenly ironical. They had spoken sneeringly of his apparent boldness when absent, and timidity when present. Even though absent, says he, I have not sufficient boldness to seek an equality with them. ¶ *Or compare ourselves, &c.* As if I were merely their equal. He does institute an implied comparison, in the following verses, exhibiting his own superiority. But he would not compare himself with them as equals

ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves

in authority. ¶ *That commend themselves.* That boast of their own powers and take such extravagant credit for their labors. The character of their boasting and self-commendation may be gathered from the following verses, in which it is implied that they had done precisely what he disavows. ¶ *But they, measuring themselves by themselves.* Taking their own class as a standard of excellence, and measuring their labors, or attainments, or endowments, by that alone. "While they thus measure themselves by themselves only, and not with the true apostles, they perceive not what they are doing, and the self-delusion into which they have fallen." — *Bloomfield*. ¶ *And comparing themselves among themselves.* Comparing themselves with each other, to ascertain their relative approach to the assumed standard of excellence; namely, the average, or at the most the aggregate qualifications of their class. Regardless of the actual superiority of others, regardless even of the unexplored field of truth around them, and of the higher claims of the gospel which press upon them, they are content if their relative rank with each other be high, and superciliously regard all those who are without their pale, however superior in knowledge and virtue they may be. The race of such is not yet extinct. There are many even now, who appear utterly unconscious of any excellence beyond the limits of their own special circle, or society, or church, and who do not realize the necessity of measuring themselves by any other standard than their own, or of comparing themselves with any except their own associates. ¶ *Are not wise.* They are not wise, who thus establish for themselves an arbitrary standard of excellence, and are content, and even proud, if they conform to it. Such, it is declared, was the fact in regard to the false teachers and their adherents. Paul

by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

13 But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but

would not rank himself with them. He regarded a higher standard; he fixed his eye on the character of Jesus Christ, and endeavored to attain excellence by imitating him. Comparing himself with that standard, he realized what he yet lacked, and pressed forward earnestly that he might become more perfect. But the unwise and foolish, with a less perfect standard, did not even pretend to aim so high, and fell miserably short of their own high-sounding pretensions.

13. *But we will not boast of things without our measure.* "But we will not rejoice above measure."—*Tyndale*. "We will not glory in things beyond our measure."—*Haweis*. "I will not let my boasting carry me beyond all measure."—*Conybeare*. "There is great obscurity in the language here, arising from its brevity. But the general idea seems to be plain. Paul says that he had not boldness as they had to boast of things wholly beyond his proper rule and his actual attainments and influence; and, especially, that he was not disposed to enter into other men's labors; or to boast of things that had been done by the mere influence of his name, and beyond the proper limits of his personal exertions."—*Barnes*. ¶ *But according to the measure of the rule, &c.* "According to the limit or boundary line of my duty."—*Robinson*. That is, I keep myself within the prescribed limits. God has assigned to me my appropriate field of duty; and to that I confine myself. ¶ *Which God hath distributed to us.* Or, assigned to me. Without discussing the question whether the apostles divided the world into separate provinces, assigning to each a share, it is sufficient to remark that a more general division is mentioned in Gal. ii. 9, whereby the care of the Jewish church was assigned to James, and Peter, and John, while Paul and

according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

14 For we stretch not our-

Barnabas were sent to the Gentiles. This special duty was assigned to Paul, at the time of his miraculous conversion and appointment as an apostle. Acts xxxvi. 17. This assignment of special duty was confirmed by the Holy Ghost. Acts xiii. 2-4. Paul might well claim, therefore, that the Gentiles were embraced within prescribed limits, and that he was emphatically "the apostle of the Gentiles." Rom. xi. 13. ¶ *A measure to reach even unto you.* Corinth, being a Gentile city, was embraced in his commission. He was not an intruder there, for he had not overstepped his prescribed limits. This was more than the false teachers could say, if they were Judaizers, as is generally supposed. But here, as elsewhere, they seemed to have stepped in, to reap where Paul had sown, and to trample down what they could not reap. They came to Antioch and created a disturbance. Acts xv. 1. They followed him to Galatia, and so deceived the people that they were induced to regard him as an enemy. Gal. iv. 16, 17. At Corinth, they had assumed to be the true leaders and teachers of the church. "I have laid the foundation," says Paul, "and another buildeth thereon." But "though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." 1 Cor. iii. 10; iv. 15. And now, they were asserting still higher authority, and claiming to be "apostles of Christ." Ch. xi. 13. This disposition to transcend their own limits, and to enter into other men's labors, is impliedly rebuked by Paul, in his disavowal of such improprieties.

14. *For we stretch not ourselves, &c.* In preaching the gospel and establishing a church in Corinth, I have not stretched the line by which my boun-

selves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you; for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ:

15 Not boasting of things

without *our measure*, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

dary of duty is circumscribed. Corinth is within the province assigned to me. ¶ *As though we reached not unto you.* As though you were in fact beyond my limits, and I had overstepped or stretched the line, in order to reach you. ¶ *For we are come as far as to you, &c.* I have preached at Corinth, as it was both my right and duty to do. I have thereby violated no rule; for I was commanded to preach to the Gentiles, which I have done, from place to place, until I reached you. And I have not yet gone over the line.

15. *Not boasting of things without our measure.* Not boasting of successes in places not assigned to me, nor within my prescribed limits; or, not boasting of successes which are more justly attributable to other men's labors than to my own. Paul not only forbore to preach in Judca, which was assigned to the other apostles, but even among the Gentiles, he declares, "I have strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." For this reason, he long delayed a visit to Rome, where the gospel had already been preached; and proposed at last to make merely an incidental visit, when on his way to Spain. Rom. xv. 18-24. And if he tarried longer at Rome than he had intended, it was because he was detained there as a prisoner. Acts xxviii. 16-31. The Judaizing teachers had conducted differently in both respects. They went among the Gentiles, who were assigned to Paul and his companions, and entered upon his labors without hesitation, assuming to themselves the credit which justly belonged to him. To say nothing of their conduct in other places, here at Corinth, where Paul had labored diligently for "a year and six months," Acts xviii.

11, and had established a church of believers, these false teachers subsequently came, formed parties, caused dissension and strife, corrupted the morals of the church, claimed it as their own, disparaged the labors and the character of Paul, professed to be independent of him and superior to him; in short, endeavored to transfer to themselves all the honor and affection which was due from the church to him. He doubtless intended that his disavowal of such conduct should be understood as a rebuke to them. ¶ *That is, of other men's labors.* This is explanatory of the words immediately preceding; meaning fields of labor assigned to others, or already cultivated by them. ¶ *But having hope, &c.* Paul was no sluggard. He had no desire to enjoy personal ease at the expense of the labor of others; nor even to remain in quietness with a church which he himself had planted, after the storm of opposition had abated. His was the true missionary spirit. As soon as he had firmly planted the gospel in any city, he desired to preach Christ in some other city, that others also might hear, and believe, and rejoice. He considered it to be the great duty of his life, to preach Christ and him crucified. For this purpose, he was willing to encounter toil, and privation, and persecution, and even death itself. Acts xx. 22-24. The hope of which he speaks here was, not for quiet rest among the Corinthians, as the result of their reconciliation, but for an opportunity to undertake other labors, which he knew would be toilsome, and which he had good reason to believe would be hazardous. ¶ *When your faith is increased.* When the errors introduced by false teachers are eradicated, and you become so settled and well-grounded as no longer to need any

16 To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

18 For not he that commend-

eth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

CHAPTER XI.

WOULD to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me.

personal instructions. ¶ *That we shall be enlarged, &c.* Some understand the apostle to mean that he had hoped to be magnified and honored by the Corinthians. I prefer the opinion of *Barnes*, that "he wished them to enlarge or magnify him by introducing him to larger fields of action; by giving him a wider sphere of labor." Perhaps he hoped to be assisted forward on his way; at least, he hoped for the opportunity to preach the gospel where Christ had not yet been named. ¶ *According to our rule abundantly.* See note on ver. 13. The idea is, that he desired to occupy the field assigned to him, if possible, to its utmost extent.

16. *To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.* This was the enlargement which he desired. Corinth was at this time the westernmost point of his travels. He desired to visit Rome, and even to extend his journey to Spain. Rom. xv. 24. But wherever he went, his single object was "to preach the gospel." ¶ *And not to boast in another man's line, &c.* Or *rule*, as in the margin. He chose to keep within his own limits, and neither to interfere with the labors of others nor appropriate to himself what belonged to them. See note on ver. 15.

17. *But he that glorieth, &c.* See note on 1 Cor. i. 31. "Let him that boasts, boast only of what Christ has done through him; for it is not by commendatory letters from their own party, but by the blessing of Christ upon their labors, that men's worth is really known." — *Stanley*. Such was the difference between Paul and the false teachers. They boasted of their own labors and successes. He boasted also; but it was of what the Lord had done through him. "I labored more

abundantly than they all," says he; "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." 1 Cor. xv. 10. To this special kind of glorying or "boasting" he seems to refer, in this important caution.

18. *For not he that commendeth himself is approved.* Not he who boasts of his own gifts and attainments, his labors and successes, nor he who relies on commendatory letters from his own party, is approved or manifested to be worthy, in the sight of God or of good men. ¶ *But whom the Lord commendeth.* Whom the Lord acknowledges as a true servant, by granting him faithfulness and success in his allotted duties. "The apostle now concludes his subject with the utterance of the fundamental idea of the whole discourse, that all glory is the Lord's (because all power and blessing are his), for which reason he alone can commend man, that is, can approve him to the hearts of his brethren in the truth." — *Olshausen*. See note on Rom. ii. 29, where similar phraseology is used, but with a somewhat different application.

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter, the apostle returns to the thought suggested in ch. x. 8, concerning his right to "boast somewhat more of his authority." He had turned aside at ch. x. 12, to specify certain forms of boasting, in which he was not disposed to indulge. Having disavowed those practices which it seems the false teachers regarded as a just foundation for boasting, he comes now to state the grounds on which he rests his claim of superiority to them. As this necessarily has somewhat the appearance of self-commendation or boasting, he bespeaks the patience and

2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have

forbearance of his brethren, assuring them that he feels constrained, by his love for them, and by his fear that they will be led astray, to vindicate his apostleship and to assert his authority.

1. *Would to God.* I earnestly desire. There is nothing in the Greek answering to the word God. "I would," or "I strongly desire," expresses the full force of the original. ¶ *Ye could bear with me a little.* That ye would grant me a patient hearing: that ye would grant me this indulgence. ¶ *In my folly.* That is, in the folly of boasting, as appears by what follows. Some suppose his adversariness, blind to their own faults, had charged him with folly, for appealing to his labors and to the success which God had granted him, in proof of his apostleship; and that he refers to that fact, in this use of the word. Others, probably more correctly, understand him to acknowledge that, under ordinary circumstances, such boasting is foolish, and unworthy of indulgence; yet under peculiar circumstances, it is not only justifiable, but necessary. ¶ *And indeed bear with me.* The margin reads, "Ye do bear with me;" and so it is understood by some commentators. The general opinion, however, is in accordance with the common translation, and the words are understood, not as a declaration, but as an earnest request that they would grant him the indulgence of a patient hearing. I earnestly wish you would thus bear with me, and request you to do so.

2. *For I am jealous over you, &c.* The word ζήλωσ, to be zealous for or against a person or thing, indicates an ardent, eager desire, either good or bad. Its nature is to be ascertained by the connection in which it is used. It is here understood to indicate strong affection. "I ardently love you with a love that comes from God. By a comparison with Gal. iv. 17, and by all the passages where it occurs in the LXX, it would appear that this word, if used at all in a good sense, is used exclusively to express zeal or affection, the idea of jealousy not entering into

its composition." — *Stanley.* "The meaning here probably is, that Paul had a strong attachment to them." — *Barnes.* "The general sense of this dark passage seems to be this: I bear the greatest affection and feel the most lively concern for you." — *Bloomfield.* ¶ *With a godly jealousy.* Literally, "with the zeal of God." See the preceding remarks on the similar word. Some understand this as expressive of divine love, excited by the Holy Spirit; some, as a Hebraism, indicating *very strong* affection; and some, as combining both ideas. Thus *Rosenmuller* interprets it, "With a truly divine, most ardent love." In either case, it may be regarded as intensifying the force of the preceding words. ¶ *For I have espoused you to one husband.* Not to himself, but to Christ. The declaration of his ardent love seems to have suggested to Paul's mind his favorite simile of the union of Christ with his church. Rom. vii. 4; Eph. v. 23-33. The idea is, that he had been instrumental in their conversion. He had urged the same fact, under a different figure, 1 Cor. iv. 15. He had brought them into a relation with Christ, not unfitly represented by that of a wife to her husband. He ardently loved both; and was deeply concerned that the union should be happy and permanent. ¶ *That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* "In describing this state of purity, the apostle employs an image drawn from marriage, but in a peculiar manner. He seems to consider himself in the position of one who selects the bride, and presents her in purity to the bridegroom." — *Olshausen.* The particular allusion to certain forms attendant on ancient marriages has been traced more or less correctly. But the general idea is sufficiently plain. Having been instrumental in bringing his Christian brethren into this holy relation with Christ, his ardent love for them inspired a deep concern that they should prove themselves worthy of it by unspotted purity.

espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled

3. *But I fear, lest by any means.* My ardent love for you prompts a deep concern lest you should be overpowered by temptation and become unworthy of the position in which I have placed you. Paul knew the dangers which beset the Corinthians; the artful management of their teachers, especially of those who endeavored to make Christianity merely a modified form of Judaism; the influence of the Grecian philosophers; and the immoralities so notoriously prevalent in Corinth; and by these or other means he feared both their faith and practice might be corrupted. Under the influence of this fear, prompted by his love, he proceeded to that statement of his claims to be their chief spiritual adviser, which, though needful in their case, he says would be folly under other circumstances, ver. 1. ¶ *As the serpent beguiled Eve, &c.* See Gen. iii. 1-6. It is generally supposed that the metaphor drawn from the marriage relation, in ver. 3, naturally suggested the temptation of Eve, not of Adam, as an emblem of the dangers to which the Corinthians were exposed, whom he had just represented as the bride of Christ. ¶ *So your minds should be corrupted.* Not by precisely the same means, but with a similar result. Lest your hearts should become alienated from the proper object of affection. Lest you should be beguiled into the belief of theories or traditions, rather than the plain word of truth. Lest you should listen to the deceiver, and become disloyal and disobedient to your lawful master. ¶ *From the simplicity that is in Christ.* "The simple and unadulterated truth as it is in Jesus." — *Bloomfield.* "Your single-minded faithfulness to Christ." — *Conybeare.* "In Scripture this word is used for integrity, Eph. vi. 5; 1 Maccab. ii. 37. The apostle was afraid the Corinthians, by following

Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

4 For if he that cometh preach-

the false teacher, might be debauched from that integrity of affection which they owed to Christ." — *Macknight.* Probably the apostle embraced in the word here rendered *simplicity*, the threefold idea of purity of doctrine, constancy of fervent love, and conscientious obedience. The remarks of *Locke*, on this whole verse, are worthy of consideration. "The simplicity that is in, rather *towards Christ*, answers to 'one husband, Christ,' in the immediately foregoing verse. For 'one' is not put there for nothing, but makes the meaning plainly this: 'I have formed and fitted you for one person alone, one husband, who is Christ; I am concerned and in care, that you may not be drawn aside from that submission and obedience, that temper of mind, that is due singly to him; for I hope to put you into his hands, possessed with pure virgin thoughts, wholly fixed on him, not divided, nor roving after any other, that he may take you to wife and marry you to himself forever.' It is plain their perverter, who opposed St. Paul, was a Jew, as we have seen. From this class, of all professing Christians, St. Paul had most trouble and opposition. For they, having their hearts set upon their old religion, endeavored to mix Judaism and Christianity together. We may suppose the case here to be much the same with that which he more fully expresses in the epistle to the Galatians, particularly Gal. i. 6-12; iv. 9-11, 16-21; v. 1-13. The meaning here seems to be this: 'I have taught you the gospel alone, in its pure and unmixed simplicity, by which only you can be united to Christ; but I fear lest this your new apostle should draw you from it; and that your minds should not stick to that singly, but should be corrupted by a mixture of Judaism.' See Rom. vii. 4, which place may give some light to this."

eth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not ac-

cepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

6 But though *I be* rude in

4. *For if he that cometh, &c.* This verse has occasioned much perplexity to commentators. Some understand the language as a sarcasm;—it is very well for you to bear with any one who preaches false doctrines to you, however difficult it may be to bear with me. Others understand the apostle to speak seriously, and to mean, ye might well bear with other teachers, if they presented better doctrines than I have preached. Others supply *me* instead of *them*, at the end of the verse, as it is in the margin, and understand the meaning to be, if you listen patiently to others, who offer another Jesus, and a spirit and gospel different from those which I have offered, yet you might well listen to *me*, for I am not inferior to the other apostles. Among these various interpretations, the first-named seems quite as reasonable as any. “For I see that, notwithstanding the new Jesus, and the new spirit, and the new gospel, of your new teachers, you bear with them; yes, well and easily with them, and why not with me? However far they may push their apostolic pretensions, they are not superior to me.”—*Stanley*. Or, without the sarcasm. “If he that cometh after me preacheth another Jesus, that is, hath another Saviour to propound to you, whom we have not preached; or if ye receive from him another spirit affording such spiritual gifts which ye have not received from us; or another gospel which ye have not accepted or received already, ye might well bear with him, in his pretensions to exceed us; but this cannot be said.”—*Whitby*. By *he that cometh*, some understand false teachers generally, preaching doctrines essentially different from the revealed gospel. But the better opinion is, that Paul refers particularly to some already in Corinth, professing to teach a more perfect doctrine than had been taught

by him, and to be superior to him, not only in knowledge, but in authority and power.

5. *For I suppose, &c.* I regard myself as fully equal to the very chiefest apostles. If they were appointed by our common Master, while he dwelt on the earth, I was appointed by the same Master, after his resurrection from the dead. If they learned the truth from his lips, even so was I taught “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Gal. i. 12. If they are endowed with miraculous gifts, “the signs of an apostle were wrought among you” by me also, ch. xii. 12. If they have labored faithfully in the work of the gospel, “I labored more abundantly than they all.” 1 Cor. xv. 10. If they suffered persecution and distress, I also have suffered abundantly, ver. 23–27. I am not a whit behind any one of them, even “the very chiefest.” If, therefore, any of the true apostles had taught doctrines contradictory to those which I have preached, I might well claim that you should listen as patiently to me as to them; for I am in all respects their equal. Much more may I insist on this claim, when your false teachers do not pretend to have been of the Twelve, but only to have been taught or commissioned by some of them. It is generally supposed that these Judaizing teachers made some such pretension, like those who interfered with Paul at Antioch, Gal. ii. 12. See also Acts xv. 1, where a similar transaction is mentioned. To this assertion of equality, the apostle felt constrained by the peculiar circumstances then existing; though ordinarily he regarded such boasting as indicative of folly, ver. 1.

6. *But though I be rude in speech.* The word here translated *rude* is the same which is translated *unlearned*, in 1 Cor. xiv. 16. It had probably been alleged by his adversaries, that Paul’s

speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

7 Have I committed an of-

Greek lacked the smoothness and polish on which the orators and philosophers prided themselves. He acknowledges the fact; yet asserts that he has a more substantial claim, namely, his knowledge of the truth. Suppose I lack the graces of speech; I am not unlearned in the truths of the gospel, which were indelibly imprinted on my mind "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." "The apostle called himself unlearned in speech, because in preaching he did not follow the rules of Grecian rhetoric. His discourses were not composed with that art which the Greeks showed in the choice and arrangement of their words, and in the disposition of their periods. Neither were they delivered with those modulations of voice, and with those studied gestures, wherewith the Greeks set off their orations. This sort of taught eloquence the apostle utterly disclaimed, for a reason mentioned, 1 Cor. i. 17."

— *Macknight*. ¶ *Yet not in knowledge*. I am not ignorant of the great truths which Christ's apostles are commissioned to preach. I do not profess "excellency of speech;" but I declare unto you "the testimony of God," "even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory." 1 Cor. ii. 1, 7. Surely the substance is more valuable than the ornaments; the truth, than the eloquence of utterance. ¶ *But we have been thoroughly made manifest, &c.* You have known me thoroughly. Your own consciences will bear witness whether I commended the *truth* to your hearts, when I dwelt among you for the space of a year and six months. You have the strongest and most convincing evidence of my apostleship. 1 Cor. ix. 2; 2 Cor. xii. 12.

7. *Have I committed an offence, &c.* Is my forbearance to receive a temporal support from you to be regarded as inconsistent with my apostleship? He proceeds immediately to notice this

fence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?

8 I robbed other churches,

allegation of his adversaries, breaking suddenly off from the direct proof which he was presenting in ver. 6. "This charge was that he took no money from the Corinthian church, but supported himself by his own labors.—From this, three conclusions were drawn: One was against his authority, that it was impossible to conceive how a real apostle could thus abstain from claiming his undoubted right; the other two were against his character, that it indicated his want of confidence in the Corinthian church, and that whilst he thus made a pretension to disinterestedness, he was really making a gain under cover of the contributions professed to be collected through Titus for the poor in Judea. It is the first two of these conclusions that he chiefly attacks in this passage, as in 1 Cor. ix. 1; but the third, which he expressly notices farther on, ch. xii. 15–18, must be borne in mind also, as accounting for the rapid transition in the passage, and for the earnestness with which he repels the charge generally. The connection therefore is: 'I was shown clearly to be an apostle amongst you; or do you doubt my authority and my love for you, because I preached the gospel without remuneration? Surely not; it was out of my especial love and care for you that I made an exception in your favor; and that whilst I received support from others, I never exacted any from you.'" — *Stanley*. ¶ *In abasing myself*. The context indicates that this abasement consisted in the voluntary poverty to which Paul subjected himself at Corinth, working with his own hands, and forbearing to exercise his right to be maintained by them while laboring for their spiritual good. ¶ *That ye might be exalted*. That ye might be instructed, converted, and reformed. That ye might be enriched with spiritual blessings. This is an unusual contrast of *abased* and *exalted*;

taking wages of *them*, to do you service.

9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the

but the connection fixes its meaning distinctly.

8. *I robbed other churches.* "Other churches I have spoiled." — *Conybeare*. The idea is, not that he took anything from other churches by fraud or violence, but that he received from them as donations what he could not have claimed as his just due. The reference doubtless is to the Macedonian churches, as in ver. 9, and especially to that at Philippi, which was extraordinarily generous to him. See Phil. iv. 15, 16. They ministered to his support, while he was laboring for others. Paul's general practice seems to have been to supply his necessities by the labor of his own hands. Acts xviii. 3; xx. 33, 34. Occasionally, however, he received donations, as here indicated. ¶ *Taking wages of them.* Receiving pay, as if I were actually laboring for them. This is what he styles *robbery*. ¶ *To do you service.* That I might labor the more for you. My wants being supplied in part by contributions from other churches, I was to the same extent relieved from manual labor, and could devote so much the more time to your instruction and edification.

9. *And when I was present with you.* When I dwelt in Corinth a year and six months, preaching the gospel and organizing a church of believers. ¶ *I was chargeable to no man.* That is, in Corinth; for he did receive some supplies from other cities. In Corinth, he "found a certain Jew, named Aquila, — and because he was of the same craft, he abode with him, and wrought; for by their occupation they were tent-makers." Acts xviii. 2, 3. With what he thus earned, together with the donations from Macedonia, his wants were supplied without charge to the Corinthians. ¶ *For that which was lacking, &c.* So much as the amount

brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep *myself*.

10 As the truth of Christ is in

earned by manual labor fell short of supplying my necessities, the brethren from Macedonia supplied by a free-will donation. ¶ *And in all things I have kept myself, &c.* In every respect, I have avoided being burdensome to the church. Not only have I been careful not to eat the bread of idleness, but I have not even suffered you to be burdened by giving me a fair equivalent for my labor. Doubtless, "the laborer is worthy of his hire." Luke x. 7. But I have not received even this of you. I desired to convince you that "I seek not yours, but you," ch. xii. 14; and therefore avoided imposing any burden whatever.

10. *As the truth of Christ is in me.* As surely as I am a Christian. As surely as I have embraced the truth of Christ. This is an emphatic asseveration, similar to that in ch. i. 18. ¶ *No man shall stop me of this boasting, &c.* Not only have I hitherto "preached to you the gospel of God freely," ver. 7, but I am determined hereafter to refrain "from being burdensome to you," ver. 9. No false teacher, or other adversary, nor even a friend, shall ever have occasion to say that I have received compensation from you for my labors. ¶ *In the regions of Achaia.* Not only in Corinth, but in the region round about, my labor shall be voluntary and gratuitous. Achaia was the southern province of Greece, of which Corinth was the principal city. See note on Acts viii. 12.

11. *Wherefore? because I love you not?* It had probably been alleged by his adversaries, that he had no confidence in the Corinthian church; that his affection was less strong for this than for other churches. Is it therefore because I do not love you, or am unwilling to receive favors from you, or lack confidence in your willingness to supply my wants? ¶ *God knoweth.*

me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

As much as to say, God knoweth that the charge is false. God, who searcheth the heart, knoweth that I love you affectionately; that my labors on your behalf have been prompted by a spirit of love; and that I have forborne to claim a maintenance, for far different reasons.

12. *But what I do, that I will do.* I will pursue the same course as heretofore. I have received no compensation from you, and I will receive none. ¶ *That I may cut off occasion, &c.* This passage has been variously interpreted. Several commentators substantially concur with *Macknight*, thus: "It would seem that the false teachers at Corinth, in imitation of the apostle, pretended to take nothing for their preaching, and boasted of their disinterestedness. Nevertheless, on other pretences, they received presents from their disciples in private, nay, extorted them. See ver. 20. Wherefore, to put these impostors to shame, and to oblige them to imitate him, the apostle declared, that he never had taken any thing nor ever would take any thing from the Corinthians, either in public or private, on any account whatever." A different interpretation is given by *Stanley*, which appears more harmonious with what is elsewhere recorded of the false teachers: — "My object in refusing to take a maintenance from you is to cut away from under the feet of my opponents the ground on which they stand, namely, the ground of representing themselves to be on the same level of apostolical authority with me, in the matter of receiving a maintenance. The whole sense is obscured by the fact that the charge brought against Paul by his opponents was double, and, to a certain extent, contradictory. On the one hand, it is clear from 1 Cor. ix. 1-27, and from this chapter, ver. 13, 20, that the false teachers not only received support from the Corinthians, but prided themselves

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

upon it, as a mark of their apostolical privileges. This, therefore, was the matter in which they 'boasted,' and it was because he did not take this support that they insinuated doubts of Paul's apostleship. But, on the other hand, it was obvious that, whilst Paul's conduct naturally gave him a claim to be considered self-denying and disinterested, their conduct was liable to the suspicion of mercenary motives; and for this reason it was their object, by repeated attacks on the want of apostolical authority shown in Paul's self-maintenance, to drive him into receiving support, and so to remove the difference between him and themselves, which, in spite of their attacks, left him in a more favorable light than themselves. Hence a cross-purpose runs through all their attack, and hence the cross-lights, so to speak, of his description of it." To the same effect, *Olshausen* says: "The words are pertinent only as expressing the simple wish of the antagonists. To these it was in a high degree offensive that Paul should persist in a steadfastness of purpose which made them ashamed; they wished therefore to divert him from it, that he might have no advantage over them, but be found the same as they. *Wherein they glory* is however to be understood of their asserting the right of receiving money to be a subject of boasting, and an apostolic prerogative, as is plain from 1 Cor. ix. 7, seq. The entire passage has therefore an ironical tinge, in this manner: However strongly they oppose me, they would gladly embrace an opportunity of permitting me to participate in their boasting, and compel me to accept of a subsistence at the hands of the church; but this is only for the purpose of concealing their own shame, and depriving me of my just fame; therefore they shall not succeed in their desire." In this verse, Paul assigns a reason for persisting in his

13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 And no marvel; for Satan

refusal to receive compensation from the Corinthians; it was not because he did not love them, but because he did love them and desired not only to relieve them from all burdens, but also to promote their spiritual welfare by destroying the influence of those who deceived them.

13. *For such are false apostles.* They have no real claims to be regarded as apostles. All their pretences of such authority are false. And because they were thus false, Paul desired to preserve the distinction between himself and them, ver. 12. ¶ *Deceitful workers.* Or, deceitful workmen. Impositors; not truly what they pretend to be. ¶ *Transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.* Not actually, but in appearance. They pretend to be true apostles, and would have you regard and obey them as such. "These men that come to infuse false doctrines into you behave themselves as cunningly as they can, and labor to imitate and seem to do those very things that we true apostles do."—*Hammond.* It is manifest from ver. 22, that the false teachers here rebuked, not only as teachers of falsehood, but as deceitful and false-hearted, were Jews. They were of the class who always manifested the utmost jealousy of Paul, and followed him from place to place, obstructing his success to the utmost of their power. He had long borne their opposition with such patience as he might. He now attacks them openly, and, by exposing their true character, he strives to deliver the church from their evil influence.

14. *And no marvel.* It is not surprising. It is perfectly natural that they should resort to hypocrisy and deceit, and pretend to an excellence of personal character and official authority which they do not possess; for such is the usual operation of the spirit by which they are actuated. ¶ *For Satan himself is transformed, &c.* Satan

himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of

literally signifies an adversary, and in the Oriental imagery is used as a personification of the spirit of opposition. See notes on John viii. 44; Rom. xvi. 20. Opposition to the truth is sometimes sanctified by the name of duty to God. Our Lord forewarned his disciples, "that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John xvi. 2. So Paul himself thought he verily "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," when, as a matter of fact, he was only "exceedingly mad" against the disciples of Jesus, Acts xxvi. 9, 11. Both he and the Jews of whom our Lord speaks mistook hatred of men for love to God, opposition to men for duty to God. Thus is sheer opposition, personified as Satan, the metaphoric name for adversary, transformed into the appearance of conscientious duty or divine service, represented as an angel of light, or a pure and faithful servant of God.

15. *Therefore it is no great thing, &c.* It need occasion no surprise. It is the natural operation of the spirit which moves them. ¶ *If his ministers also be transformed, &c.* "You are not to wonder if men of the basest, blackest character put on the appearance of the greatest sanctity, and even become eminent as professed preachers of righteousness."—*Barnes.* The same metaphor is here continued; and the false teachers are styled "his ministers," namely, the ministers of Satan, or the adversary, as the embodiment of the spirit of opposition; just as those whose semblance they assume are denominated "ministers of righteousness;" by which last appellation is universally understood, ministers inspired by a righteous spirit, ministers laboring with Paul for the promotion of truth and righteousness. ¶ *Whose end shall be according to their works.* Who shall be justly punished for their unrighteousness generally, and for

righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise,

yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.

17 That which I speak, I speak *it* not after the Lord, but as it

their hypocrisy and opposition in particular. The great principle of a just and adequate recompense to all men, according to their works, shall be applied to these offenders, whatever their pretensions or outward appearance. See notes on Rom. ii. 6; vi. 21, 22.

16. *I say again.* The reference may be to the "folly" of boasting, ver. 1, or to the boasting itself, which he had already commenced three several times, ch. x. 8; xi. 1, 6, and was each time led into a digression by the occurrence of some side-issue, so to speak. From this point, however, he pursues his subject uninterruptedly.

¶ *Let no man think me a fool.* I know it is foolish to boast, under ordinary circumstances; but in my case I consider it justifiable; and I desire that you might acquit me of folly. ¶ *If otherwise.* If you do consider me to be a fool because I thus indulge in boasting. ¶ *Yet as a fool receive me.* Or, bear with me, or suffer me. Although the word is different, the meaning is equivalent to ver. 1, 19, 20. This is the emphatic portion of his request in this verse. As if he had said, I desire, indeed, that you should not regard me as a fool; but whether you do so regard me or not, at least grant me a patient hearing; "bear with me a little in my folly," even if you consider it such, ver. 1. It is necessary to the vindication of my character. It is necessary to your own welfare, that you should understand whether I am more worthy than others of your confidence; whether you may rely on me as a genuine apostle, or more safely follow those who have endeavored to estrange you from me. ¶ *That I may boast myself a little.* See note on ver. 1. A part of the original force is lost in the translation. *Conybeare* translates, "while I, too, boast a little of myself;" and *Macknight*, "that I also may boast a little." Taken in connection with what fol-

lows, the idea manifestly is, you bear patiently with my adversaries when they boast much; grant your indulgence to me, then, while I also boast comparatively little.

17. *That which I speak.* Namely, in the way of boasting. ¶ *I speak it not after the Lord.* This may mean, I speak it not by inspiration. More probably it means, I speak it not after the manner of the Lord, who never boasted of his kindred, or labors, or sufferings. I speak it not precisely in the character of a meek and humble disciple of the Lord. But the necessity is forced upon me to vindicate my character as a genuine and faithful apostle. It is not unlikely that Paul intended it should be understood by his adversaries and by his true brethren, that if a *little* boasting was inconsistent with perfect humility and meekness, *much* boasting was proportionately more inconsistent; so that his language may be regarded, both as an apology for himself, and as a rebuke to his adversaries. ¶ *In this confidence of boasting.* Equivalent to, in this confident boasting. See note on ch. ix. 4. Even though such boasting have the appearance of foolishness, or be actually foolish, existing circumstances require it, and I speak confidently. Thus the language in this verse is generally understood. But some interpret it in an opposite sense, regarding it as ironical. "Be it so, if you please, that what I am going to speak, I speak not, as I profess to do, according to the Lord, that is, by inspiration, or suitably to the purposes of his religion, but speak it, as it were, in folly, in the confidence of boasting."—*Bloomfield*. Those who thus understand the apostle suppose him to refer to some disparaging remarks of his adversaries. Either interpretation gives a good sense; but I prefer the former, as more consistent with the general scope of the context.

were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

18. *Seeing that many glory, &c.* Although Paul sometimes appears to refer specially to some one false teacher, whom he regarded as his arch-adversary at Corinth, yet it appears that there were *many* who claimed pre-eminence over him, and divided the brethren into factions. There were many who *gloried*; or boasted; for though the translation be different, the original word is the same which occurs in ver. 17. ¶ *After the flesh.* In regard to some external advantage, such as lineage, labors, or sufferings, as appears from ver. 23-33. It is observable that Paul's "foolish" boasting is confined to such advantages. In these he excelled his antagonists, and needed not here to speak of his spiritual endowments. These he introduces in ch. xii. as his crowning boast. ¶ *I will glory also.* I will boast also of my external advantages, as well as of those which afford more conclusive proof of apostleship.

19. *For ye suffer fools gladly.* You patiently and cheerfully *bear with* them; the same word which occurs in ver. 1. "The connection is: Bear with my boasting, now that I come before you as a fool; for you are only too glad to listen to these fools among whom I now enrol myself."—*Stanley.* In the next verse, several instances of such willing forbearance are given. ¶ *Seeing ye yourselves are wise.* There may be an allusion here to the pride of the Greeks in their wisdom and philosophy. Or perhaps, rather, the meaning may be, you are so wise that you perceive distinctly the folly of boasting, and think me foolish because I indulge in it. Yet you have borne more extravagant boasting, wise as you are, and therefore I shall not hesitate to "boast myself a little." In either case, it is manifest from what follows that the apostle attributes wisdom to the Corinthians, not seriously, but ironically. "This is perhaps, says Dr. Bloomfield, the most sarcastic sen-

19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves* are wise.

20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man

tence ever penned by the apostle Paul."—*Barnes.*

20. *For ye suffer, &c.* You bear patiently with those who not only boast foolishly, but treat you with indignity. Thus do you manifest your wisdom, and "bear with fools gladly." The general idea running through this verse has been stated, with probable correctness, thus:—"The words following are intended to place the faults of the false teachers in the strongest point of view. They must not, however, be too much pressed on; nor explained with reference to any hypothesis respecting the kind of persons who were the false teachers. The words may be freely rendered, with Newcome, 'if a man subject you to his imperious will, exact a large stipend, receive private gifts besides, proudly exalt himself over you, treat you contumeliously in the highest degree.'"—*Bloomfield.* It is manifest, however, from ver. 22, that some of the more prominent of these false teachers were Jews; and their rapaciousness, if not their pride, indicates the same class by a notorious characteristic. ¶ *If a man bring you into bondage.* If a teacher make himself master of your faith or conduct; if he bring you under the yoke of the law, Gal. ii. 4; v. 1; if he impose on you a yoke "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," Acts xv. 10; if he bring you under absolute subjection to himself, requiring you to obey him in all things; you willingly bear with all this. ¶ *If a man devour you.* This is understood to refer to the claims of false teachers for extravagant compensation. If men utterly consume all your property by their inordinate exactions; if, like their prototypes who devoured widows' houses, Matt. xxiii. 14, they deprive you of all your possessions for their own use; even this you bear patiently. ¶ *If a man take of you.* If a man take your property by force, as some

devour *you*, if a man take of *you*, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

21 I speak as concerning re-

proach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

understand it; or, as others with more probability suppose, if he extort presents from you, by urging it as your duty, or by hypocritical appeals to your sympathy. ¶ *If a man exalt himself.* If he be proud and haughty, and require you to be humble and abased in his presence. If he claim to be superior in authority even to the apostles commissioned by our Lord, and require the most abject submission from you. ¶ *If a man smite you on the face.* Some understand this literally, and suppose that this indignity was sometimes offered by the rulers of the church; citing in confirmation the direction in 1 Tim. iii. 3, that a "bishop" should be "no striker," and an order passed by the council of Braga, A.D. 675, "that no bishop at his will and pleasure strike his clergy, lest he lose the respect which they owe him." Others, quite as probably, understand the language figuratively, as descriptive of abusive and contumelious treatment generally, of which a blow on the face was regarded anciently, and is even now, as one of the most aggravating examples. If a man offer you an insult, even equivalent to a blow on the face, you bear it patiently. Such is the description of what the factions at Corinth bore from the false teachers, to whose boastings they listened patiently and willingly.

21. *I speak as concerning reproach.* "I speak with reference to the reproach cast on me." — *Haweis.* "I say this to your shame." — *Olshausen.* "I speak of degradation, as though I were weak and they were strong." — *Conybeare.* The interpretation of the passage is as various as the translation. Some understand Paul to mean that the Corinthians should be ashamed of their submission to false teachers who thus abused them, when his own true power so far exceeded theirs. "You bear with my opponents, as though I were too weak to resist them." — *Conybeare.* Others understand him to speak

of the reproaches cast upon himself by his adversaries, who represented him as both destitute of apostolic power and conscious of his weakness, so that he dared not be bold in their presence. This is probably the true interpretation; yet of those who adopt it some suppose the reference to be exclusively to what follows: "In what follows, I speak in answer to the reproach cast on me, namely, that I am weak." — *Macknight.* Others, more correctly, regard this as a connecting link between the preceding and following context, and as referring equally to both. Thus *Stanley* says, the words of the text are keenly ironical and "uttered with an air of mock shame; that I, unlike them, was a poor weak creature; I had not the strength or energy to trample on you and plunder you, and assume a lofty demeanor, and smite you on the face; I could do nothing of this kind; so far they are quite right, and I wish them joy of it. But then (here the irony is partly dropped) whatever grounds of confidence, of real confidence they have, those grounds (here he again assumes the half ironical, half apologetic tone), pardon my folly for the word, those grounds of confidence I have no less than they."

¶ *As though we had been weak.* As though my power were inferior to that of my opposers. This was their constant allegation against him, and on this ground they claimed to be not amenable to his authority. ¶ *Howbeit.* "But. The sense is, if any one is disposed to boast, I am ready for him. I can tell also of things that have as high claims to confidence as they can. If they are disposed to go into a comparison on the points which qualify a man for the office of an apostle, I am ready to compare myself with them." — *Barnes.* ¶ *Whereinsoever any is bold.* In whatever qualification any of those false teachers dare to boast. ¶ *I speak foolishly.* See note on ver. 1. ¶ *I am bold also.* I do

22 Are they Hebrews? so *am I*. Are they Israelites? so *am I*. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am I*.

23 Are they ministers of

Christ? (I speak as a fool,) *I am more*; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

not shrink from a comparison with them. I am fully their equal in all the external advantages in which they so much exult, and altogether their superior in spiritual gifts and power. See note on ver. 18.

22. *Are they Hebrews?* The apostle now fairly commences his boasting, or self-glorification, to which he has approached apparently with great reluctance; compelled, as it were, by the circumstances to which he has referred in his frequent digressions since the subject was first introduced in ch. x. 8. From the manner in which he commences, it is manifest that the false teachers who had occasioned the principal difficulty at Corinth were Jews, by lineage, whether born in Judea or among the Gentiles. Most of the opposition encountered by him, during his whole ministry, came from this class, either directly or indirectly. The unbelieving Jews hated him, because he proclaimed a prophet greater than Moses, and inculcated doctrines which they called heresy; and they followed him from city to city, sometimes using personal violence, and sometimes exciting the populace against him. The converted Jews, as a general fact, regarded him with much prejudice and jealousy. Their national pride, as the peculiar people of God, was not extinguished by conversion; they were unwilling that the Gentiles should share with them in the blessings of the gospel, on equal terms; they insisted that the Gentiles should, at the least, be circumcised, and observe the Mosaic law; Acts xv. 1, 5; they desired to engraft Christianity upon Judaism, as if it were but an improved form of the ancient doctrine; and because Paul would not conform to their wishes, but preached the gospel as a new doctrine, revealed by Christ, and designed for the equal benefit of Jews and Gentiles, and because he insisted that the Gentiles were entitled to Christian liberty and should

not be brought under bondage to the Mosaic law, they opposed him with earnestness, often with bitterness. Of this class, apparently, were the false teachers at Corinth, who boasted among other things that they were "Hebrews," "Israelites," of the "seed of Abraham," as if this were a peculiar qualification for the ministry of the gospel. Everywhere, in the early church, the Jewish converts claimed superiority over the Gentiles; and the same superiority, on the same ground, was claimed by the Judaizing teachers. ¶ *So am I*. My claims are equal to theirs, on this ground. I also am a Hebrew, an Israelite, a descendant from Abraham. I am of the tribe of Benjamin, circumcised under the law, and instructed according to the strictest sect of the Jews, a Pharisee. Phil. iii. 5. I can boast as boldly of my lineage as any of my adversaries; and so far as this is a qualification for the ministry, I am as well qualified as any other.

23. *Are they ministers of Christ.* They claimed to be ministers of the Messiah, notwithstanding they were Jews; indeed they boasted of their connection with him, in respect to race, as a principal qualification for the office they had assumed. Paul does not, in so many words, deny that they were ministers of Christ; but, admitting their claim, he asserts his own superiority. ¶ *I speak as a fool*. See note on ver. 1. A stronger word is used here than those which precede. I speak, not only foolishly, but like an absolute fool or madman. "His frequent reminding them of this charge was eminently fitted to humble them, that they had ever made it, especially when they were reminded by an enumeration of his trials of the character of the man against whom the charge was brought." — *Barnes*. ¶ *I am more*. Not more than a minister of Christ; but more certainly a minis-

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

ter than they. My claims are better founded, and sustained by better evidence. The evidence which he adduces in this chapter is founded on his labors and sufferings in the cause of Christ. While his adversaries had been living in luxury and comparative idleness, he had encountered toil, and privation, and persecution, in preaching the gospel in waste places, proclaiming the truth in regions where Christ had not previously been named, establishing churches among the Gentiles, and exercising a watchful care over them when planted. He had thus exhibited more convincing evidence of his devotion to the gospel and his faithfulness and zeal in the ministry, than any which they could produce. ¶ *In labors more abundant.* From the day of his conversion, he had devoted himself wholly to this work. More than half of the history denominated the "Acts of the Apostles" is devoted almost exclusively to the labors of this apostle. So constant and long-continued were his labors, that he did not hesitate to say "I labored more abundantly" than any of the Twelve originally commissioned as apostles. Much more might he style his "labors more abundant" than those of the false teachers at Corinth. ¶ *In stripes above measure.* I have been excessively scourged, ver. 24, by the enemies of the gospel, in consequence of my devotedness to its promulgation. ¶ *In prisons more frequent.* The only imprisonment of the apostle, previous to this date, recorded by the historian, was that at Philippi. Acts xvi. 24. But it should be remembered that this history is brief, and by no means records all the labors and sufferings of all the apostles. We may feel very certain that Paul does not state in this chapter what is not true; for, aside from all moral considerations, if his adversaries could have convicted him of falsehood, his reputation in the church would have been utterly destroyed. He was too prudent to give them the opportunity. ¶ *In deaths oft.* Often

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice

in peril of death. Indeed, he was once supposed to be actually dead, Acts xiv. 19, in consequence of being stoned at the instigation of the Jews. There is probable reason to suppose that the four instances mentioned in the next two verses were designed by him as examples of his "deaths oft;" for in each his life was in deadly peril.

24. *Of the Jews.* It was not necessary to name the Jews, for the purpose of designating the persons who thus scourged Paul; for the number of stripes sufficiently indicated that fact, thirty-nine being the practice under the Jewish law, while no limit was prescribed by the Gentiles. It is not improbable that he designed, by this example of Jewish hostility to the gospel and barbarity to its ministers, to intimate that, notwithstanding the boasts of the false teachers, the Jews were not necessarily the most devout Christians, or best-qualified ministers of the gospel. ¶ *Five times received I forty stripes save one.* By the Jewish law, "forty stripes" was the extreme limit allowed. According to the uniform practice, thirty-nine was the limit, lest, by possibility, the law should be violated by a miscout in the number. The particular instances of that scourging are not recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. It is known, however, that Paul often preached in the Jewish synagogues; that the Jewish rulers had power to inflict this punishment, according to their law; and that their hostility was sufficient to induce the exercise of their power. Such conduct as he ascribes to them is perfectly characteristic.

25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods.* This was a Gentile mode of punishment, even more dangerous than the Jewish scourging, because there was no legal limit to the blows. One instance of the kind is recorded, Acts xvi. 22, 23. ¶ *Once was I stoned.* Namely, at Lystra, when "there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him

I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 *In journeyings often, in*

out of the city, supposing he had been dead." Acts xiv. 19. On a previous occasion he narrowly escaped the same peril at Iconium, Acts xiv. 5, from which place the Jews followed him to Lystra, and there succeeded in accomplishing their purpose. ¶ *Thrice I suffered shipwreck.* This does not include the shipwreck on his visit to Rome, which occurred afterwards. He travelled much by sea, as well as by land, and shipwrecks were not unusual in the Mediterranean. There is nothing improbable in the assertion; and both conscience and policy would induce the apostle to state nothing false. See note on ver. 23. ¶ *A night and a day I have been in the deep.* The word rendered "a night and a day," indicates the full period of twenty-four hours. The word rendered "the deep" has been understood by some to indicate a dungeon, as if the apostle had been thus confined. The more common and more correct opinion is, that it indicates the sea; and that, in some one of the shipwrecks mentioned, the apostle floated upon some fragment of the vessel, or upon some plank or other buoyant substance, for a whole day and night, before he drifted to the shore, or was taken into some vessel.

26. *In journeyings often.* As his history in the Acts of the Apostles demonstrates, journey implies fatigue and the endurance of many trials; especially when undertaken on foot, as was Paul's almost invariable custom. ¶ *In perils of waters.* Such, for example, as the shipwrecks and exposure mentioned in ver. 25. "They that go down to the sea in ships," Ps. cvii. 23, are often exposed to imminent peril, even since the great improvements made in the science of navigation. It is not extravagant to say that hundreds of lives are now lost yearly on our great lakes and rivers, without reckoning the disasters on the ocean. Not less perilous was

perils of waters, *in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils*

navigation in Paul's day; for although more prudence was then used, their ships or boats were not so well constructed, or so carefully guarded against disasters. ¶ *In perils of robbers.* Many of the countries traversed by Paul were infested by robbers. Indeed, it is not now safe to pass through them without an armed guard. This stain rests not alone on the morals of the Gentiles, among whom Paul chiefly travelled. It will be remembered that the parable of our Lord was not considered improbable, which described an outrage by thieves or robbers, between Jerusalem and Jericho. Luke x. 30-37. ¶ *In perils by mine own countrymen.* That is, by the Jews. They were his most bitter enemies, following him on his missionary travels, and "stirring up" the people against him in every city. Scarcely an instance can be found in the Acts of the Apostles, of any violent opposition against Paul, in which the Jews were not the principal actors, or at least the prime movers. He might well say he was "in peril" by them. ¶ *In perils by the heathen.* By the Gentiles; but almost always, as has been before observed, when they were exasperated by the artful misrepresentations of the Jews. Occasionally, as at Ephesus, Acts xix. 23-41, the uproar seems to have been spontaneous among the Gentiles; and doubtless the apostle would have been in great peril if they could then have laid hands on him. ¶ *In perils in the city.* A case of this kind, at Damascus, is mentioned in ver. 32, 33. See note on Acts ix. 29; see also Acts xiv. 19; xvi. 19-24; and for a later instance, Acts xxi. 27-36. ¶ *In perils in the wilderness.* In the waste places through which he travelled. ¶ *In perils in the sea.* See ver. 25. ¶ *In perils among false brethren.* By these "are chiefly meant pretended brethren, whether Jews or Gentiles; generally, perhaps, the former, who

in the wilderness, *in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

27 *In weariness and painful-*

feigned to be converted, in order to act as spies; but partly Judaizing Christians may be meant. See Gal. ii. 4."—*Bloomfield*. It is not unlikely that there may be an allusion here to the false brethren at Corinth.

27. *In weariness*. Occasioned by severe labor; such as journeying, preaching, and working with his own hands for a subsistence. ¶ *And painfulness*. An intense form of weariness; not merely exhaustion, but weakness accompanied by pain. Some translate these two words, "In labor and toil;" others, "in toil and weariness;" others, "by toil and trouble." The general idea is the same, whichever way translated. He had endured fatigue and pain, through excessive labor. ¶ *In watchings often*. Wakefulness, occasioned either by fatigue or by anxiety. ¶ *In hunger and thirst*. See note on 1 Cor. iv. 11. ¶ *In fastings often*. See note on ch. vi. 5. Probably the reference here is chiefly to involuntary fasting, for lack of food. ¶ *In cold and nakedness*. See note on 1 Cor. iv. 11.

28. *Beside those things that are without*. "And besides all the rest."—*Conybeare*. "Besides these troubles from without."—*Macknight*. Some understand Paul to refer to the labors and perils which he has already mentioned, by "the things that are without." Others understand the phrase as equivalent to "not to speak of things not already enumerated;" like "the time would fail me to tell," &c. Heb. xi. 32. Aside from all other considerations, my mental anxiety for the churches would be enough to task all my powers of endurance. ¶ *That which cometh upon me daily*. "That which is my daily pressure."—*Macknight*. "That crowd of labors and anxieties which perpetually beset me."—*Bloomfield*. The idea of a severe pressure is embraced in the original, which is but feebly expressed in the

ness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28 *Beside those things that*

common version. Some have supposed the apostle to refer to the daily course of the brethren, asking his advice and instruction. The more common and better opinion is, that the "care of the churches" was the constant pressure mentioned. "I am daily oppressed with those cares which arise from an attention to so many churches."—*Gilpin*. "That which cometh upon me daily is the care of all the churches."—*Whitby*. Such is the most natural construction of the language, and it is generally adopted. ¶ *The care of all the churches*. He had established several churches, in whose prosperity he felt a deep interest, and whose members naturally looked to him for religious instruction and for advice and direction in cases of doubt or difficulty. Even churches planted by others, especially among the Gentiles, would also look to him, in cases of emergency, as best qualified to decide the various questions which were perpetually arising; and all such shared in his sympathy and anxiety. Gathered, as all these churches were, from Jews and Gentiles, whose previous religious opinions and prejudices and habits of life were conflicting and discordant, such questions must have been frequent, and sometimes very perplexing. Mere human wisdom was inadequate to their solution; and his success is attributed by the apostle to divine aid. "To these extraordinary perils, Paul still adds the continued cares and labors of his charge. So that if he desired to boast himself he would undoubtedly glory in his weakness, which necessarily leads him, in explanation of his efficient agency, to the power of God which must be mighty in him. See ch. xii. 9."—*Olshausen*. The remark of *Wordsworth* is not unworthy of consideration. "If there was one visible head of all the churches among the apostles, it was not St. Peter, but St. Paul."

are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30 If I must needs glory, I

29. *Who is weak, &c.* Among the various interpretations of this verse, the following appears most reasonable, and is substantially adopted by many commentators. "This is, I conceive, meant to illustrate the *care* preceding, and show the *interest* he took in all the churches. *Weak* may, with most commentators, be understood of weakness in the faith; and *burn*, of anxiety to recover a sinning brother. Thus the sense will be: Who among my converts is weak in faith, and I am not also weak? that is, as compliant to his weakness, as if I were weak; see Rom. xii. 15; 1 Cor. ix. 22; who is perverted in his Christian principles, or erring in Christian practice, and I burn not with grief and zeal to recover him?" — *Bloomfield*. The general idea is, that he sympathized with his brethren in all their infirmities and trials; that he accommodated himself to their weaknesses, not willing that they should perish for lack of kind and generous treatment; and that he was ardently desirous to reclaim all who, for whatever cause, had "departed from the faith," 1 Tim. iv. 1, or had become guilty of unrighteous conduct. ¶ *Who is offended, &c.* Literally, *scandalized*. "The word signifies, to make one stumble or fall, and figuratively, to cause one to offend, to lead astray, to lead into sin." — *Robinson*. If any one is caused to offend, or is led into sin, by whatever temptation. See Rom. xiv. 21; 1 Cor. viii. 13. ¶ *And I burn not*. Either with indignation against the tempter, or, more probably, with love and sympathy for the tempted and fallen, and with an ardent desire to relieve him.

30. *If I must needs glory, &c.* "And these my sufferings are the only things which I shall think fit to boast of, now I am by calumniators con-

will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

32 In Damascus the governor

strained to do so." — *Hammond*. "If it is necessary to boast, and I am heartily sorry that it is, I will, however, boast of those things only which relate to my infirmities; as I know this tenderness of temper, that so often weeps and trembles, and glows with such strong emotions, on what some may think trivial occasions, will be esteemed by them; yet of these only, and of those sufferings which show the weakness of human nature, and my need of support from Christ, of these alone have I hitherto presumed to speak." — *Doddridge*. These paraphrases seem to express the meaning quite as well as some more elaborate expositions. Paul has thus far boasted only of his Jewish descent, his labors, and bodily sufferings, ver. 22-27, and his mental anxieties and sympathetic yearnings, all which implied the need of divine strength in aid of human infirmity. In such weakness he gloried, because he was thus made conscious of strength through the power and blessing of God. Ch. xii. 10; Rom. v. 3-5.

31. *The God and Father, &c.* This is a solemn appeal to God, that what he had said of his labors and sufferings was strictly true. Most of these had been performed and endured at a distance from Corinth, and were probably incapable of proof by witnesses residing in that city. Accordingly, he appeals to the Searcher of all hearts, that he had neither falsified nor exaggerated; thus giving the strongest possible assurance of his veracity. This asseveration is understood by some to refer to what follows; but the more general opinion is, that it refers to the foregoing statement of labors and sufferings.

32. *In Damascus*. See Acts ix. 24, 25. "The circumstance which oc-

under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me :

33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

curred at Damascus is only mentioned by way of supplement, as the first persecution which Paul had to endure." — *Olshausen*. It may be regarded as an example of "perils in the city," mentioned in ver. 26, the former enumeration being in general terms, not specifying the particulars. ¶ *The governor*. Literally, the *Ethnarch*; an officer appointed by the king. ¶ *Under Aretas the king*. Supposed to be that king of Arabia Petrea, whose daughter Herod married and repudiated. See notes on Matt. xiv. 1; Acts ix. 23. ¶ *Kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison*. Either with an armed force stationed in the city, as a permanent guard; or with a special band of men, commissioned for a particular purpose, namely, to watch the gates. See Acts ix. 24. A literal translation would be, "watched (or guarded) the city of the Damascenes;" an organized body of watchmen or guards being implied. ¶ *Desirous to apprehend me*. Stimulated probably by the Jews, who would represent Paul as an apostate, who had forsaken the religion of his fathers, and had become an associate of those whom he had been expressly sent to Damascus to apprehend. *Light-foot* suggests that he may have been represented as a spy. Probably the governor employed or permitted the Jews to watch the gates; and as they did this under his authority, what is said to have been done by them, Acts ix. 24, is here described as done by him.

33. *And through a window, &c.* See note on Acts ix. 25. "There was something of humiliation in this mode of escape; and this, perhaps, is the reason why, in a letter written 'fourteen years' afterwards, he specifies the details, 'glorying in his infirmities' when he is about to speak of 'his vis-

CHAPTER XII.

IT is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 I knew a man in Christ above

visions and revelations of the Lord.'" — *Howson*. Paul here says merely that he *escaped*. From Acts ix. 26, it appears that he went to Jerusalem; being apparently the same journey and visit of which he speaks in Gal. i. 18.

CHAPTER XII.

This chapter is a continuation of the foregoing, and, as far as to ver. 12, is devoted to the same general subject; namely, a vindication of Paul's claims to the apostleship. In ch. xi. 22, 33, he had shown that no objection could be made to him on account of his lineage, inasmuch as he was of "the seed of Abraham;" moreover, the labors he had performed, the perils he had encountered, and the privations and sufferings he had endured, sufficiently attested his faithfulness as a "minister of Christ;" and his lively interest in the welfare of the churches, and his deep sympathy with the weak and the erring, manifested the indwelling of the Master's spirit in him. He now introduces evidence of another and higher character; evidence, of which his calumniators were not only comparatively but absolutely destitute.

1. *It is not expedient for me, doubtless, to glory*. Or, *to boast*. Some suppose the apostle here, as in ch. xi. 1, means that boasting is generally foolish and inexpedient; but justifiable and necessary under certain circumstances. Others understand him to speak ironically, thus:—"Notwithstanding all my labors, and sufferings, and deliverances, it is not proper, it seems, for me to boast." — *Macknight*. In this interpretation, Barnes substantially agrees; and it is probably correct. ¶ *I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord*. "The two expressions are to be thus distinguished;

fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I can-

not tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven.

in the *vision*, the communication from on high may be considered principally, if not entirely, addressed to the sight, so that something is imparted by images, as in Acts x. The *revelation*, on the contrary, is an unfigurative communication of the divine Spirit to the human. The two forms may be united, *nāy*, are usually found together, yet always in such a manner that one or the other of these conditions predominate." — *Olshausen*. The same distinction is indicated by the etymology of the two words, as well in the original as in the translation. The former denotes a thing *seen*, whether its true nature and import be understood or not; the latter denotes a thing *revealed*, uncovered, made known, and impressed on the mind in an intelligible manner. It is generally supposed that Paul uses these words here with exclusive reference to what he relates in ver. 2-4; the *visions* embracing what he saw, and the *revelations* what he heard and realized. *Macknight*, however, thinks he included his visions on other occasions, Acts ix. 27; xviii. 9; xxii. 18; xxiii. 11; "but above all, those visions of Christ which he saw when he was caught up into the third heaven." In like manner, he thinks the revelations are included, which are mentioned in Acts xiii. 2; 1 Tim. iv. 1; "perhaps also those which he says, ver. 4, he heard in paradise." The general opinion, I think, is the better.

2. *I knew a man in Christ*. "The best commentators are agreed that this expression signifies a disciple or servant of Christ; the apostle thus speaking of himself in the third person through modesty; as John, in his gospel, xviii. 15; xix. 35." — *Bloomfield*. That he does refer to himself is evident from ver. 6, 7; and the same reference is required by the general scope of his argument. ¶ *Above fourteen years ago*. "It is impossible to fix this date precisely. It could not have been his conversion, which was more than twenty years before this; it might possibly be

shortly after the escape from Damascus, which was about seventeen years before this, and which as mentioned in ch. xi. 32, 33 may have been intended as a prelude to this." — *Stanley*. It is not impossible that he refers to the "trance" which he had "in the temple," Acts xxii. 17-21, when the nature of his mission was more fully made known. This was soon after his departure from Damascus. It is sufficient, however, for us, that the fact is averred by Paul to be true; the time of its occurrence is of less importance; it was doubtless when such a divine manifestation was most needed by him for support and encouragement, and when the truths revealed could be made by him most serviceable to mankind. ¶ *Whether in the body, &c.* The fact he asserts unqualifiedly. The manner of its occurrence he does not attempt to describe. Whether he was caught up bodily into heaven, or whether his soul was separated from the body for a time, and taken to heaven, or whether the whole scene was impressed so vividly on his mind, while utterly unconscious of earthly objects, that he seemed to be in heaven, he does not profess to know; nor is it important that we should know. Either was clearly within the power of God; and in either way he was able to make an impression on Paul's mind which could never be obliterated. ¶ *God knoweth*. This was sufficient for Paul. It was enough for him that God had performed the work, and that he knew how it was accomplished. The remark of *Barnes* is very suggestive: "How happy would it be, if all theologians were as ready to be satisfied with the knowledge of a *fact*, and to leave the mode of explaining it to God, as this prince of theologians was." ¶ *Such a one caught up to the third heaven*. "This is accommodated to the language of the Jews of that age, who held that there were three heavens; (1) the region of the atmosphere; (2) the siderial, or place of the stars; (3) the

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

heaven properly so called, the abode of God and his angels."—*Bloomfield*. The Jews sometimes spoke of seven heavens; but only three are mentioned in the Bible. In the ordinary language of the present day, "caught up into heaven" would express the same idea.

3. *And I knew such a man, &c.* I was well acquainted with him. Some regard this as indicating a second rapture or vision. Others, as an instance of the not uncommon practice of reiterating an important statement, to make it more emphatic and impressive. See note on ver. 4.

4. *How that he was caught up into paradise.* Some commentators, such as Grotius, Whitby, Doddridge, Wardsworth, and many of the ancients, suppose Paul to describe two raptures, and to mean by *paradise* a place different from the *third heaven*. "The opinion of all the ancients seems to have been this: that he was rapt at several times, into several places, and consequently that he speaks of more raptures than one. Irenæus saith, 'That he was caught up into the third heaven, and again was carried into paradise.' So also say Tertullian and Pseudo-Ambrosius."—*Whitby*. Those who thus interpret the passage suppose the *third heaven* to be the final home of the saints after the resurrection, and *paradise*, their dwelling-place between death and the resurrection. Most of the commentators, however, suppose one and the same rapture to be mentioned, and the same place to be indicated by different names. "Methought I was in the highest heaven, ver. 2, here called paradise in respect of the joys that dwell there."—*Hammond*. "It is evident, by comparing this name with the second, that the same place is meant by *paradise* and *heaven*."—*Assemb. Annot.* "That we are to assume a distinction between the third heaven and *paradise* (as Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Ori-

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

gen, Jerome, and also Bengal, maintain), is incapable of proof; both expressions indicate presumably the same thing, that is to say, the most exalted region of light, the immediate presence of God."—*Olshausen*. "Some have supposed that Paul here by the word '*paradise*' means to describe a different place from that denoted by the phrase '*the third heaven*;' but there is no good reason for this supposition. The only difference is, that this word implies the idea of a place of blessedness; but the same place is undoubtedly referred to."—*Barnes*. In this latter opinion I fully concur. For the specific meaning of the word *paradise*, see note on Luke xxiii. 43. ¶ *And heard unspeakable words.* "Words not to be spoken."—*Tyndale*. "Words which cannot be spoken."—*Geneva Bible*. "Ineffable words."—*Hawcis*. "Words which were no human words."—*Stanley*. The manifest idea is, that human language is inadequate to express the full glory of what was then communicated to him. ¶ *Which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* The margin has *possible* instead of *lawful*; and some commentators regard this as the better translation. But this would make this phrase a simple repetition of the preceding. If the words were unutterable, that is, if words were inadequate to the expression of the ideas, it would seem unnecessary to add, that it was not possible to utter them. But, if we adopt the common version as correct, we obtain the additional assurance, that even if it were possible to clothe those ideas in intelligible words, it would not be lawful or proper to attempt it; and this is probably the idea which the apostle intended to convey. "The words following signify 'and which, if they were capable of being expressed, it would not be lawful for me to communicate;' and that, Schoettgen observes, 'because the apostle had not the authority to de-

5 Of such a one will I glory : yet of myself I will not glory, but mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool ; for I

will say the truth : but *now* I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

7 And lest I should be exalt-

clare the mysteries revealed unto him, these having been not so much for the sake of the church as for himself, for the strengthening of his own faith and the alleviation of his own affliction.'"

— *Bloomfield*. Peculiar services were required of Paul; and a peculiar preparation was granted to him. If it be inquired, why God did not enable and permit Paul fully to disclose all those sublime mysteries for the general information of mankind, or why he does not permit those who have departed from earth to return and give a full description of the glories of heaven, many answers might be given, more or less true and satisfactory. But the one sufficient answer is, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Matt. xi. 26. It becomes us to be grateful for what God has revealed, and to believe that it is for our highest good that he has revealed no more.

5. *Of such a one I will glory.* The meaning of this verse has been paraphrased thus : — "Concerning such a one I will boast, as a person highly favored of Christ; but of myself, of my own qualities, though I be the person who was thus honored, I will not boast, unless of my bodily weaknesses; because they befel me through my being caught up." — *Macknight*. He had hitherto spoken of himself in the third person, as some other individual. And of such a person, whoever it might be, he claims the privilege of boasting. ¶ *Yet of myself I will not glory.* Of myself, as you see me; of myself, so far as I am known by outward indication; in regard to myself, in this sense, I will not boast. ¶ *But in my infirmities.* I will boast of nothing, except of my labors, trials, and sufferings, through which divine strength becomes manifest in human weakness. See note on ch. xi. 30.

6. *For though I would desire to glory, &c.* He had said in ver. 5, that he

would not glory in aught except in his infirmities. He now declares that if he should glory in the "visions and revelations of the Lord," such boasting would not be foolish, because it would be strictly true. "And yet I could boast reasonably. For if I were desirous to do so, I should not really be foolish, though I affected folly in doing so before." — *Stanley*. ¶ *For I will say the truth.* Whatever I should choose to say on this subject would be the literal truth, however it might appear to you. The truth, without the slightest exaggeration, would furnish ground for the highest desirable boasting; and boasting, thus founded, would not be foolish. ¶ *But now I forbear, lest, &c.* I will not even insist on stating the truth, in regard to this peculiar manifestation of divine favor to me, lest you should estimate me more highly than what you have seen or heard of my actions would justify. This is understood by some, as spoken ironically; as if there were danger that the Corinthians, especially those who were deluded by the false teachers, should think too highly of him. Others understand the apostle to mean seriously, that he did not desire any honor or reputation beyond that which was justly his due with reference to his conduct in the ministry. In either case, the general idea is the same; namely, that he was willing to be judged by what he had done, by the general character of his conduct as a minister of Christ, without reference to any spiritual exercises, ecstasies, visions, or the like, whose reality could not be known to others, except from his own testimony. "Unlike enthusiasts and fanatics, he appealed to no secret impulses; did not rest his claims for public confidence on any peculiar communications from heaven; but wished to be estimated by his public deeds." — *Barnes*. In regard to his forbearance to speak more at large of

ed above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn

in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

his "visions," it has been well observed, that "the silence of the apostle is a remarkable contrast to the elaborate description given by Mahomet, of his nocturnal journey to Jerusalem and to paradise."—*Stanley*.

7. *And lest I should be exalted above measure.* Lest I should become vain and self-confident, as one peculiarly honored; lest I should think of myself more highly than I ought to think; Rom. xii. 3; lest I should not be humble, but be puffed up with spiritual pride. ¶ *Through the abundance of the revelations.* "Through the exceeding greatness of these revelations."—*Conybeare*. The original word, literally *hyperbole*, seems to denote the magnitude rather than the multiplicity of revelations. The reference is doubtless chiefly, if not exclusively, to what is related in ver. 2-4. ¶ *There was given to me.* That is, God gave to me. The whole context denotes that Paul regarded the affliction of which he proceeds to speak, as mercifully designed, and as allotted to him for his own good. And so, if we fully realized their design, we should regard the various afflictions which we endure in life. They come not by chance, nor are they imposed in cruelty; but they are designed by our heavenly Father, either to preserve us from a greater evil, or in some other way to promote our spiritual good. ¶ *A thorn in the flesh.* There is scarcely another passage in the Bible, on which so many and such conflicting opinions have been expressed. The remarks of *Barnes* are so judicious, and strongly marked by common sense, that I readily adopt them, and think no apology necessary for their length: "So far as the word here used is concerned, it means a sharp thorn or prickle; and the idea is, that the trial to which he refers was as troublesome and painful as such a thorn would be in the flesh. But whether he refers to some infirmity or pain in the flesh or the body is another question, and a question in

which interpreters have been greatly divided in opinion. Every one who has become familiar with commentaries knows that almost every expositor has had his own opinion about this, and also that no one has been able to give any good reason for his own. Even Baxter, who was subject himself to some such disorder, supposes it might be the stone or gravel; and the usually very judicious Doddridge supposes that the view which he had of the glories of heavenly objects so affected his nerves as to produce a paralytic disorder, and particularly a stammering in his speech, and perhaps also a ridiculous distortion of the countenance. This opinion was suggested by Whitby, and has been adopted also by Benson, Macknight, Slade, and Bloomfield. But though sustained by most respectable names, it would be easy to show that it is mere conjecture, and perhaps quite as improbable as any of the numerous opinions which have been maintained on the subject. If Paul's speech had been affected, and his face distorted, and his nerves shattered, by such a sight, how could he doubt whether he was in the body or out of it when this occurred? Many of the Latin fathers supposed that some unruly and ungovernable lust was intended. Chrysostom and Jerome suppose that he meant the headache; Tertullian an earache; and Rosenmuller supposes that it was the gout in the head, and that it was a periodical disorder such as affected him when he was with the Galatians, Gal. iv. 13. But all conjecture here is vain; and the numerous strange and ridiculous opinions of commentators is a melancholy attestation of their inclination to fanciful conjecture where it is impossible in the nature of the case to ascertain the truth. All that can be known of this is, that it was some infirmity of the flesh, some bodily affliction or calamity, that was *like* the continual piercing of the flesh with a thorn, Gal. iv. 13, and that it was something de-

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for

my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

signed to prevent spiritual pride. It is not indeed an improbable supposition that it was something that could be seen by others, and that thus tended to humble him when with them."

¶ *The messenger of Satan to buffet me.* To buffet is literally to strike; and figuratively, to maltreat. If we regard the infirmity as the messenger of Satan, then we may understand the apostle to speak in conformity to Jewish opinions and usages; see note on Luke xiii. 16; or we may suppose Satan used in its ordinary sense of adversary, meaning here an adversary to personal comfort, and the infirmity the means by which that comfort was destroyed. But the passage is susceptible of another interpretation. "It is observable, that these words may be rendered thus: 'There was given me a thorn in the flesh, that the angel of Satan might buffet me.' Since, then, he calls the false apostles ministers of Satan, it is not to be wondered that he here styles them, or the chief of them, who thus reviled and contemned him for this infirmity, and therefore labored to take off the affections of the Corinthians from him, an angel of Satan, buffeting him."—*Whitby*. To the same effect is the paraphrase by *Doddridge*: "It pleased God to appoint to me an affliction which was so painful that it was like a pointed thorn in the flesh, continually piercing and wounding me; and this in such circumstances, that one would think it had been intended on purpose that the messenger and apostle of Satan, the false teachers whom I have been describing, ch. xi. 13-15, under that character, might from them take occasion to buffet and upbraid me." For the manner in which the false teachers are described as ministers or messengers of Satan, see notes on ch. xi. 14, 15.

8. *For this thing.* On account of this "thorn in the flesh." ¶ *I be-*

sought the Lord thrice. Either, I prayed frequently, in which sense the Jews were accustomed to use the word "thrice," one of their sacred numbers; or, I made this the special subject of prayer on three distinct occasions. So our Lord prayed three times that the bitter cup might pass without drinking; and though it did not please God to grant the specific request, yet he did grant the grace of endurance, and sent an angel to strengthen him. Luke xxii. 43. In like manner, though Paul obtained not the specific boon he desired, he obtained that which was actually more valuable, the promise of perpetual divine assistance, ver. 9. ¶ *That it might depart from me.* That my infirmity might be healed; or according to the metaphor, that the thorn might be plucked out of my flesh. Prayer for deliverance from affliction is the Christian's privilege. Yet we should always pray with submission to the divine will, Luke xxii. 42; and imitate Paul's cheerful acceptance of the gift better than he requested, namely, the continuance of the affliction accompanied by a due measure of grace, ver. 9.

9. *And he said unto me.* Whether this answer was given in an audible voice, or otherwise impressed on Paul's mind, does not appear. It was sufficient for him that he had an answer in such a manner that he could not mistake its character. He had frequent communications from his Master, and readily recognized the source from which they came. Acts ix. 4; xxii. 18; Gal. i. 12. ¶ *My grace is sufficient for thee.* A similar parting assurance was given to the Twelve, Matt. xxviii. 20. It is observable that we have here an instance of that abundant grace mentioned by the apostle, in Eph. iii. 20, where he declares that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." For although the assurance was given

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

by Christ, yet Paul always recognized the Father as the original source of all grace, and doubtless accepted this as a pledge of the grace of God through his Son. See note on John xii. 44. And the blessing promised was greater than that which he asked. He asked deliverance from a physical infirmity; he obtained assurance of spiritual aid, sufficient for his utmost need. He cheerfully accepted this indication of the divine will, even glorying in the painful infirmity which still cleaved to him, inasmuch as it constantly reminded him of the divine promise. ¶ *For my strength is made perfect in weakness.* "My power in the conversion of the world is displayed in the weakness of the instruments whereby that work is accomplished."—*Macknight*. To this display of divine power manifested through the weakness of human instrumentality, the apostle refers in 1 Cor. i. 27-29; ii. 4, 5. ¶ *Most gladly, therefore, &c.* I not only do not complain that the "thorn" remains in my flesh; I even rejoice that it is so, since it is the occasion of a divine gift to me. I boast of this infirmity, since it is attended by such a rich spiritual blessing. See note on Rom. v. 3-5. ¶ *That the power of Christ may rest on me.* That the strength which he imparts through grace may abide with me.

10. *Therefore I take pleasure, &c.* See note on ver. 9. So abundant is the spiritual consolation and strength which I receive in connection with my infirmities and afflictions, that I am even pleased that God has subjected me to such a discipline. The more fully I am convinced of my own weakness, and of my personal inability to accomplish the work committed to me, the more distinctly and joyfully do I recognize the mighty power of God, giving success to my labors, in spite of the violent opposition of my adver-

11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

saries, and in spite also of all the infirmities and disadvantages which beset me. I take pleasure in all this, "because, in fact, my weakness is the greatest indication of the heavenly power that assists me."—*Gilpin*. ¶ *In infirmities.* In my weaknesses and afflictions. See note on ch. xi. 30. ¶ *In reproaches.* The special reference is probably to the disparaging and contemptuous remarks of his opposers at Corinth; though he may have intended to include also the reproaches of the Jews, who denounced him as an apostate, and of the unbelieving Gentiles, who treated him with contempt because he adopted not their systems of philosophy. ¶ *In necessities.* In want of the common comforts of life. See note on ch. xi. 27. ¶ *In persecutions.* These came upon him continually. From the history in the Acts of the Apostles, it would seem that he scarcely entered a city, where he did not encounter violent opposition and personal abuse. See Acts xii. 22, 23. ¶ *In distresses for Christ's sake.* See note on ch. vi. 4. In all which I suffer, on account of my devotion to Christ and my labors in the promulgation of his gospel. He had the Master's promise that such sufferings should not be in vain, but should be richly rewarded. Matt. v. 11-12. ¶ *For when I am weak, then am I strong.* When most conscious of my own weakness, then am I also most conscious of divine aid. When most deeply sensible that, like my blessed Master, "I can of mine own self do nothing," then do I most realize the omnipotence of God, who through his spirit dwelling in me, "doeth the works." John v. 30; xiv. 10. See note on ver. 9.

11. *I am become a fool in glorying.* See note on ch. xi. i. I have done what would be foolish under the circumstances. ¶ *Ye have compelled me.* Your own conduct made it necessary

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

13 For what is it wherein ye

that I should vindicate my character as a true apostle of Jesus Christ; in doing which I have been obliged to refer to the evidences of my qualifications and faithfulness. If you call this foolish boasting, remember that you are responsible for it; for "ye have compelled me." ¶ *For I ought to have been commended of you.* I had exhibited among you "the signs of an apostle," sufficient to convince reasonable men; ver. 12; and you ought not only to have received me, upon such evidence, but to have commended me to others. If you had done so, if you had vindicated my character against the aspersions of false teachers, and had borne a manful testimony to my authority and integrity, all my self-commendation would have been unnecessary. ¶ *For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles.* In no respect whatever am I inferior to them; my calling was as genuine, and my endowments, and labors, and sufferings, and success, as abundant as theirs; and the divine power has been as visibly and effectually manifested through me as through them. See note on ch. xi. 5. ¶ *Though I be nothing.* Some understand this as spoken sarcastically; that is, though the false teachers affect to despise me as destitute of authority and power, as a mere nothing, unworthy of notice. Others, and I think more properly, suppose the apostle to have spoken seriously, expressing his humility, and his consciousness that, of himself, he could do nothing; that all his success should be attributed to the power of divine grace. Thus he speaks of himself in 1 Cor. xv. 10. See also Phil. iv. 13.

12. *Truly the signs of an apostle.* The miraculous powers which distinguished the apostles. See Mark xvi. 17; Rom. xv. 19. ¶ *Were wrought among you.* That is, by me; or rather, by the divine spirit, through me.

were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

14 Behold, the third time I

Such miracles authenticated his claim to the apostleship. See note on 1 Cor. ix. 2. ¶ *In all patience.* Notwithstanding all the unreasonable opposition encountered by me, I was patient, and gave you repeated proofs, by a repetition of these signs, until you were convinced, and acknowledged me as an apostle. ¶ *In signs and wonders, &c.* The ability to perform miracles was properly regarded as evidence of a divine mission. To this evidence our Lord appealed, John x. 37, 38; xv. 24; and the apostles likewise, Acts ii. 22. "The appeal which the apostle here made to the whole church of the Corinthians (in which there was a great faction which called his apostleship in question), concerning the miracles which he had wrought in their presence, and the spiritual gifts which he had conferred on many of them, is a strong proof of the reality of these miracles and gifts." — *Macknight.*

13. *For what is it, &c.* "Paul demands of the Corinthians, with reproving irony, in what respect they were inferior to any other church! Only in this, that he had not proved burdensome to them, but had entirely maintained himself without their aid: *this* wrong they must indeed forgive him." — *Olshausen.* ¶ *I myself was not burdensome to you.* This was the only point in which the Corinthians were "inferior to other churches," in respect to the proofs of his apostleship. He had given them all the necessary "signs of an apostle," ver. 12; he had labored faithfully with them "a year and six months," Acts xviii. 11, and fully instructed them in the fundamental principles of the gospel; he had watched over them with anxious solicitude; in his former epistle he had warned, admonished, exhorted, and further instructed them; and he had now given them a further

am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay

up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though

proof of his love and deep interest in their welfare in this second epistle. He had done for them all which had been done for the most favored church, with this single exception; namely, he had not permitted them to give him that maintenance, which, by his apostolic privilege, he had a right to claim. But the reason why he exercised self-denial, and forbore to receive what was justly his due, he had already explained, 1 Cor. ix. 1-18. ¶ *Forgive me this wrong.* See note on ch. xi. 7. If this be an offence, forgive it. "One of the most cutting things ever said." — *Bloomfield.* If, because he had subjected himself to privation, that he might benefit them the more, they were offended, instead of being grateful to him for such a proof of his love, he craved forgiveness.

14. *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you.* Macknight, Conybeare, and others, suppose that Paul had already visited Corinth twice; but the more general opinion is that he had made one visit, had been disappointed in his intention of a second, and now for the third time had made arrangements to see them. "This is the third time that I am ready to travel to you. Once I have been actually (that is, on his first visit in Acts xviii. 1); a second time I intended to come (that is, according to the plan mentioned in ch. i. 15, 16); the third time, on the present occasion, I am now ready. He speaks of his readiness to make the journey as a proof of his affection, just as his not having made the journey proposed in ch. i. 15, 16, was regarded by them as a proof of negligence or disregard." — *Stanley.* ¶ *And I will not be burdensome to you.* I shall not depart from my former determination. I had good reasons for "making the gospel of Christ without charge" to you, 1 Cor. ix. 18, on my first visit; the same reasons still exist; and I shall not now be burdensome to you. See notes on

ch. xi. 9, 10. "The scope of the passage is to exclude any misrepresentation of the false teachers, that he was only urging his past moderation to pave the way for future demands upon them. Thus the sense is: I have not been burdensome to you heretofore; and when I come to you again, as I am now for the third time purposing in mind to do, I will not be burdensome to you." — *Bloomfield.*

¶ *For I seek not yours, but you.* I seek not your property, but your welfare. I seek not, like the false teachers, through covetousness, with feigned words, to make merchandise of you, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 3; but I desire to give you full proof of my love, by enduring labor and privation on your behalf, asking no compensation except the consciousness of having bestowed spiritual benefits on you. If you increase in knowledge, in faith, and in holiness, I shall be fully repaid for my labor of love. Here, as elsewhere, by disavowing motives of personal interest, the apostle impliedly rebukes and condemns his adversaries.

¶ *For the children ought not, &c.* A common Hebraism, indicating that it is the duty of parents to provide for children, rather than of children to provide for parents. Such is the general rule, inasmuch as children are ordinarily more dependent on parents than parents on children. Yet cases not unfrequently occur, when, by reason of misfortune, or disease, or old age, parents become dependent on children, who are by no means here excused from the performance of filial duty. Paul claimed to hold the relation of a father to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iv. 15; and he proposed, according to the ordinary rule, to provide for his children, rather than permit them to provide for him.

15. *And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.* I am willing to devote all my energies to your welfare; to spend my time, my strength,

the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

yea, to sacrifice my life on your behalf, even as an affectionate father regards no sacrifice as too great, if thereby he may secure the welfare of his children, A similar sentiment is expressed, Acts xx. 23, 24; 2 Cor. iv. 11, 12. ¶ *Though the more abundantly, &c.* Paul was conscious that his love was not properly reciprocated by his brethren, ch. vi. 11-13. Indeed, so far as the false teachers and their factions were concerned, he knew that the more disinterested his own love was made to appear, the more bitterly they hated him. But notwithstanding these discouragements, his love prompted him to make full proof of his ministry, through the hope that the faithful brethren might receive spiritual benefit, even though his enemies might not be converted into friends. "It is very evident throughout this masterly passage (ver. 13-15), whose spirited turn displays at the same time the deepest feeling, for what cause the apostle deemed it so important to reject decidedly all offers of support. His adversaries sought their own advantage, and at least improved their position by means of the gifts which they received. Paul's own practice was entirely the reverse of this, whereby he naturally aroused the hatred of those worldly-minded persons, because his life tacitly reproved their proceedings." — *Olshausen*. To love one's enemies, to be kind to the evil and unthankful, to labor for the benefit of the ungrateful, is required of his disciples by the Master, in order that they may imitate his Father and their Father. Matt. v. 44-48; Luke vi. 35.

16. *But be it so, &c.* In this and the two following verses, the apostle anticipates and answers an objection, which may or may not have been actually urged by his opposers; namely, that although he had not directly taken compensation from the Corin-

17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?

18 I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did

thians, he had, by crafty management, received from them a full equivalent for his labors; that he had in fact made a gain of them. It is not improbable that they represented the contribution which Titus was sent to collect, as actually designed for Paul's private benefit; and this may have been one reason why he insisted that one or more approved brethren should be appointed by each church to take charge of the funds thus collected. 1 Cor. xvi. 3. ¶ *Being crafty.* Using deceptive arts; accomplishing an object by indirect means. ¶ *I caught you with guile.* For example, obtained contributions for my own benefit, under pretence that they were for the relief of "the poor saints at Jerusalem." The context implies that the charge of craftiness and guile had respect to pecuniary affairs, and especially to the matter of the contribution.

17. *Did I make a gain of you, &c.* "In refuting this slander, Paul appeals boldly to the facts, and to what they knew. Name the man, says he, who has thus defrauded you under my instructions. If the charge is well-founded, let him be specified, and let the mode in which it was done be distinctly stated." — *Barnes*.

18. *I desired Titus.* Namely, I desired him to go to Corinth to urge forward the contribution. Ch. viii. 6. ¶ *And with him I sent a brother.* "I sent with him the brother whom you know, with the view of preventing this suspicion; see ch. viii. 18, 19. The Syriac has 'the brethren,' which would refer to both the brethren mentioned in ch. viii. 18-21." — *Stanley*. It would seem, however, that Paul here refers to a former visit of Titus. It is understood that Titus and his associates, ch. viii. 18-21, conveyed this epistle to Corinth. As they had not yet arrived on this mission, we can scarcely understand Paul to have in-

Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps?

19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

quired how they had discharged their duties therein. Perhaps the visit of Titus to Corinth mentioned in ch. viii. 6, may be distinct from that named in ch. viii. 18-21, and may be the one here intended. ¶ *Did Titus make a gain of you?* He appeals with confidence. He knew that no such charge could be maintained. He knew that the faithful brethren had no such suspicion; for they had affectionately entertained him, and dismissed him with tokens of respect and confidence. Ch. viii. 13-16. ¶ *Walked we not, &c.* Did he not manifest the same spirit which you had seen in me? Did not his conduct resemble mine? Was he more burdensome to you, or more disposed to consult his private interest, than I was, when it is confessed that "I did not burden you"? If you acquit me, then, can you accuse him? What ground remains for the charge, that I sought to "make a gain of you" through him?

19. *Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves to you?* "In conclusion, Paul again remarks that he speaks not all this to his own commendation, but entirely to their edification. For he feared that, upon his approaching coming among them, he might not find them in a frame of mind such as he could desire, and might hence appear severe and not tender towards them." — *Olshausen*. He would not have them suspect that his disavowal of self-interested motives was designed solely for the vindication of his character, for his own benefit. It was rather for their edification, inasmuch as by being convinced of his integrity, they would the more readily give heed to his instruction and admonition. ¶ *We speak before God in Christ.* I

31*

20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

21 *And* lest, when I come

speak as a Christian man in the presence of God. See note on ch. xi. 31. ¶ *But we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.* Whether I labor and suffer on your behalf, whether I exhort, admonish, or rebuke, whether I boast of my authority and apostolic gifts, or vindicate my character against unjust aspersions, all is done for the promotion of your welfare, that you might be built up together in the faith of the gospel. See note on ch. v. 12.

20. *For I fear lest when I come.* As I am now preparing to do, ver. 14. ¶ *I shall not find you as I would.* That I shall not find you perfectly obedient to the truth, adorning the doctrine of Christ by a holy life and conversation. ¶ *And that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not.* That I shall be obliged to exercise sharp discipline, and manifest severity, instead of giving unrestrained indulgence to my affectionate feelings in terms of approval and commendation. ¶ *Lest there be debates.* See note on Rom. i. 29. ¶ *Envyings.* See note on 1 Cor. iii. 3. ¶ *Wraths.* Anger and bitter animosity, which is often engendered by such contentions as existed at Corinth. 1 Cor. iii. 3. ¶ *Strifes.* Or contentions between different parties. ¶ *Backbitings.* See note on Rom. i. 30. ¶ *Whisperings.* See note on Rom. i. 29. ¶ *Swellings.* Equivalent to being puffed up. 1 Cor. iv. 6, 18, 19. ¶ *Tumults.* Such as might arise in their partisan strife. See note on ch. vi. 5. If he should find such disorders, discipline would be necessary, unpleasant both to him and to them.

21. *And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me, &c.* Lest I should have the deep mortification of

again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

finding you unworthy of the labor I have bestowed on you, and should be obliged to administer discipline instead of rejoicing in your fidelity. ¶ *And that I shall bewail, &c.* Their repentance would fill me with joy; their persistence in iniquity, with grief and lamentation. ¶ *Uncleanness.* See note on Rom. i. 24. ¶ *Fornication and lasciviousness.* Vices to which the Corinthians were peculiarly exposed, their city being, in this respect, a by-word throughout the civilized world. See note on 1 Cor. v. 1. Against these the apostle often admonishes them in both epistles, as if they were the sins which did most easily beset them.

CHAPTER XIII.

There is no change of subject at this division of chapters. Paul had stated at the close of ch. xii., that he feared he should find cause for discipline, at his approaching visit. He now expresses his firm determination to visit them soon, and to perform his duty faithfully, however painful to them or to him. The whole is a continuous description of a meditated event.

1. *This is the third time I am coming to you.* Although the most obvious import of this statement is, that he had twice before visited Corinth, yet it is the more general and probably correct opinion, that he merely speaks of his third *readiness* for the visit. Once he had been at Corinth, and planted the church; once he had prepared to go, but was disappointed; he was now ready for the third time. See note on ch. xii. 14. ¶ *In the mouth of two or three witnesses, &c.* Some suppose Paul refers to his former visits and his epistles, as witnesses; others, that he refers to the brethren who would accompany him. I prefer the interpretation

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

2 I told you before, and fore-

by *Doddridge*, in which *Macknight* and *Barnes* substantially agree: "As several cases will come before me on which it will be necessary for me to give my judgment, I assure you I shall think myself obliged to proceed on that reasonable maxim in the Jewish constitution (Numb. xxxv. 30; Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15); that every word or thing, admitted for evidence in the decision, shall be established by the concurrence of what cometh from the mouth of two or three credible witnesses." I will not condemn on insufficient testimony. See notes on Matt. xviii. 15, 16.

2. *I told you before.* Namely, that I would not fail to perform my duty, as in the last clause of the verse. See 1 Cor. iv. 21. ¶ *And foretell you, as if I were present the second time.* As if I were even now a second time present, I announce to you my fixed determination. I forewarn you what will be the certain result of my visit. ¶ *And being absent now I write.* See 1 Cor. v. 3. I have deliberately resolved what to do; and I give this timely notice before I meet you face to face, that there may be opportunity for repentance and forgiveness. ¶ *To them which heretofore have sinned, and all others.* To all sinners in the church, whether their offenses have been of long standing and heretofore rebuked, or of more recent occurrence. Let all who have violated the rules of the gospel give heed to the admonition. ¶ *That if I come again, I will not spare.* I will assuredly impose on them the punishment which they deserve. They had indulged the fancy that he would not dare to punish them, ch. x. 9-11; they had persisted in sin and braved his authority. He would now give them unmistakable evidence of his power.

tell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:

3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

3. *Since ye seek a proof, &c.* Since my authority and power as an apostle have been doubted and denied, and the proof challenged, I will exhibit it in the prompt and effectual punishment of offenders, ver. 2. The foregoing chapters refer to the taunts and revilings of Paul's adversaries, and their insinuation that he was conscious to himself that he was destitute of power. ¶ *Which to you-ward is not weak, &c.* Or, "He shows no weakness toward you, but works mightily among you." Among the various interpretations of this passage, the following by *Whitby* seems quite as correct as any other: "Christ showed his power among them, by enabling St. Paul to preach the gospel to them in demonstration of the spirit and power, so efficaciously as to convert them to the faith, 1 Cor. ii. 4; in that variety of gifts conferred on them together with the gospel, by which the testimony of Christ was confirmed, 1 Cor. i. 6; by his power conspicuous in seconding St. Paul's delivery of the incestuous person up to Satan, 1 Cor. v. 4, 5; by the chastisement they suffered for communicating in the Lord's supper unworthily." See 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30. Though he works by weak means, he is strong; and his "strength is made perfect in weakness," ch. xii. 9, as you shall have full proof when I visit you.

4. *For though he was crucified through weakness, &c.* The meaning of this verse is thus expressed by *Macknight*, with whom many commentators agree: "For though indeed Christ was crucified, by reason of the weakness of his human nature, which was liable to death, yet he now liveth by the power of God. And though I also, his apos-

4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus

tle, am weak, as he was, being subject to persecution, infamy, and death, I shall nevertheless show myself alive with him, by exercising the power of God among you, punishing you severely if ye do not repent." It may be, as some have suggested, that the apostle refers also to the fact that his Master submitted quietly to indignity and to death, and thus appeared weak, when he actually had power to call angelic assistance, and refrained only in deference to his Father's will and the fulfilment of prophecy, Matt. xxvi. 53, as an illustration of his conduct in refraining to exercise the miraculous powers which he possessed. ¶ *Liveth by the power of God.* Who raised him from the dead. Acts v. 31; Rom. i. 4. ¶ *We also are weak in him.* Margin, *with him.* I am subject to the infirmities and trials incident to mortality, as he was, while in the flesh. ¶ *But we shall live with him, &c.* "That is, we shall show you that we are alive. By the aid of the power of God we shall show that we are not as weak as our foes pretend; that we are invested with power; and that we are able to inflict the punishment which we threaten." — *Barnes.* The same power which raised Jesus from the dead is effectual in his apostles for the government of the church and the punishment of offenders.

5. *Examine yourselves, &c.* Or, try yourselves. The word is often translated *tempt.* "He breaks off abruptly with his argument, and appeals at once to their experience: I have spoken of my power over you. But, after all, it is yourselves that you ought to examine; it is yourselves that you ought to prove; your own faith, and your own

Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

consciousness of the presence of Christ amongst you, is the best proof of his being in me."—*Stanley*. Are you conscious of a divine power in yourselves, through the gifts you have received? believe, then, that such power is in me. ¶ *Whether ye be in the faith*. Whether ye are true Christians. ¶ *Prove your own selves*. Bring your faith and spiritual gifts to a proper test. ¶ *Know ye not, &c.* Do you not feel the divine influence in yourselves? ¶ *Except ye be reprobates*. Except ye be destitute of proof. There is a verbal reference here to the former clause which does not appear in the common version. "Put yourselves to the proof concerning Christ's presence with you which ye seek in me. Know ye not, of your own selves, that Jesus Christ is dwelling in you? unless, perchance, when thus proved, you fail to abide the test."—*Conybeare*. "Prove yourselves; know ye not yourselves that Jesus Christ is among you? unless, perhaps, ye be without proof."—*Macknight*. No allusion whatever is made here to what is sometimes called the doctrines of reprobation, as is generally agreed by the best commentators.

6. *But I trust, &c.* "The previous sentence is broken in upon by the thought which the last words, 'unless ye be without proof,' suggest. But if it should so be that you have no proof of Christ's presence, I trust that you will know when I come, that I, at least, am not without this proof."—*Stanley*. Weak as some pretend that I am, I trust I shall exhibit convincing proof that Christ dwells in me, by the miraculous power bestowed on me. See note on ver. 7.

7. *Now I pray to God that ye do no evil*. Besides the truly Christian desire here expressed, that his brethren might be pure and devoted servants of God and disciples of Jesus Christ, this prayer, as the context indicates, involves an-

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

other important idea; namely, that Paul desired the spiritual welfare of his brethren rather than the opportunity to exhibit proof of his apostleship. The previous declaration might seem to indicate a wish for an occasion to exhibit that proof in the administration of discipline. But he prays that he may have no such occasion. ¶ *Not that we should appear approved*. This is not my chief desire. I have no wish to prove my apostolic power at your expense. I desire rather that, by your obedience, you render such proof unnecessary. ¶ *Though we be as reprobates*. Though I should be as one destitute of proof, having no opportunity to manifest it. I would rather submit to the continued taunts of my adversaries, that I give no proof of the power which I claim to possess, than give that proof in acts of severe discipline. In this verse, *approved* and *reprobates* express a direct verbal contrast, in the original, which does not appear in the translation. "The sense of the verse seems to be this: 'However, I pray that ye may do nothing evil, and deserving of punishment; for it is my wish and purpose, not that our divine commission be by that means approved; but rather that ye may do what is right and good, and that we may thereby be, as it were, without that proof, by not having to examine the power;' namely, of punishing offenders."—*Bloomfield*. "Though I should be indeed *without proof* of my apostleship, having no occasion to punish you. In the language of modern times, a *reprobate* is one who is excluded from the possibility of salvation by an absolute decree of God; one who is delivered over to perdition. But nowhere in Scripture is the word ἀδόκιμος used in that sense."—*Macknight*. To the same effect many other commentators. See Selections, &c.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

9 For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, *even* your perfection.

8. *For we can do nothing against the truth, &c.* "The apostle having prayed that the Corinthians might be found doing no evil,—and assuring them therefore that they would be secured from his censures and chastisement, he assigns a reason here for that assurance given them; because, says he, we do nothing against the truth, but for the truth; having our power given us only for edification, and not for destruction."—*Burkitt*. "Though I have the power of punishing supernaturally, I cannot show this power upon any of you, unless it be that you are offenders, and your punishment be for the advantage of the gospel."—*Locke*. Paul desired it to be distinctly understood that, whether he commended or re-proved, whether he rewarded or punished, whether he communicated spiritual gifts or cut off offenders from the church, he had a single object in view; namely, the honor of his Master and the welfare of his brethren. His own reputation was of minor consequence. He would not seek popularity by overlooking offences, nor strive to magnify his office by inflicting unnecessary punishment. His power was not granted for any such purpose, and he would not misuse it. If they deserved punishment, he would assuredly administer it, and thus give proof of his power; if they did not, they need have no apprehensions, for he would rejoice in their good estate, whatever they or others might think of his power.

9. *For we are glad when we are weak, &c.* I rejoice in my weakness in connection with your strength. The context indicates the special meaning to be, I am willing, and I even rejoice to appear weak, if you give me no occasion, by your misconduct, to make proof of my strength. I choose that you should obey the gospel and thus

10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell.

honor our Master and secure your own happiness, rather than that you should offend and be punished. I will gladly submit to the continued reproach of weakness, and patiently bear all the taunts of my bitterest opposers, if ye will only be firm in the faith and obedient to the precepts of the gospel.

10. *Therefore I write these things, being absent.* My strong desire for your reformation and perfect obedience, rather than for a conspicuous display of my power, has induced me thus to forewarn you, ver. 2, and to exhort you to spare me the pain and mortification of administering punishment, ch. xii. 21. I seek not my own glory, but your spiritual good. My willingness to bear the continued taunts of my opposers, as destitute of apostolic power, if your obedience will only render its exercise unnecessary, has prompted the foregoing exhortations and admonitions. ¶ *Lest being present, I should use sharpness.* Lest I should be under the necessity of inflicting punishment. It is for the purpose of avoiding this that "I write these things." I shall certainly perform my duty when I visit you; if any persist in ungodliness, I shall exert my power, in punishing them, and thus exhibit full proof of my apostleship; nevertheless, I shall rejoice to be accounted *weak*, and incapable of such *proof*, if I may find you *strong*, inasmuch as my most ardent desire is for your perfection, ver. 9. ¶ *According to the power, &c.* This power was given rather for edification than for destruction, yet effectual for either. If you compel me to use it in the infliction of pain, I shall assuredly do so; yet it was rather designed for assisting your growth in grace, in which manner only I desire to use it;

Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

and therefore I have made this appeal. See note on ch. x. 8.

11. *Finally, brethren, farewell.* "The word here rendered *farewell* means usually to 'joy' and 'rejoice,' or to be glad, Luke i. 14; John xvi. 20, 22; and it is often used in the sense of 'joy to you,' 'hail,' as a salutation. Matt. xxvi. 49; xxvii. 29. It is also used as a salutation at the beginning of an epistle, in the sense of 'greeting.' Acts xv. 23; xxiii. 26; Jas. i. 1. It is generally agreed, however, that it is here to be understood in the sense of 'farewell,' as a parting salutation, though it may be admitted that there is included in the word an expression of a wish for their happiness."

— *Barnes.* The same idea is properly included in the English word "farewell;" for though used as a parting salutation, its meaning is, fare you well, prosperity and happiness attend you. ¶ *Be perfect.* Amend whatever is wrong in your faith or practice. Let your reformation be entire. The original word denotes the re-arrangement, or putting in order, of what has previously been out of place. Hence *Macknight* renders, "be ye restored;" namely, by reformation of all that is amiss. Of course, absolute perfection is not to be understood, as such perfection belongs to God alone. ¶ *Be of good comfort.* Be comforted by the precious promises of the gospel. Confidence in God, for support in all trials, and for such supplies of grace as your necessities may require. Some translate "comfort one another." In either case, it should be regarded as the expression of a wish for their happiness.

¶ *Be of one mind.* Let your divisions be healed; let your strifes cease. 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4. Follow Christ alone. Be united in your desire to honor him, by obeying his precepts, and by relying with unwavering confidence on his promises. ¶ *Live in peace.* Repress your factious dispositions. Contend no longer as to the relative claims of

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

13 All the saints salute you.

14 The grace of the Lord

different teachers. Banish from your hearts all ill-will towards each other. Remember that "one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matt. xxiii. 8. Dwell together in unity, as becometh brethren. Ps. cxxxiii. 1. See note on Rom. xii. 18. ¶ *And the God of love and peace shall be with you.* It is observable that the peculiar appellation here given to God has a close relation to the subject of exhortation. If men will love one another, the God of love will dwell with them. If they will live in peace, the God of peace will fill their hearts with his influence. See note on ch. i. 3. Doubtless God is omnipresent, and is "not far from every one of us." Acts xvii. 27. Yet our consciousness of his presence, much more our consciousness of his approval, depends on the state of our own minds and hearts. If we indulge a spirit of hatred, we cannot realize the approval of the God of love. If we indulge a spirit of contention and strife, we cannot realize the approval of the God of peace. But let us love each other and live in peace, and the God of love and peace will dwell with us.

12. *Greet one another with a holy kiss.* Or, *salute* one another. See notes on Rom. xvi. 16, where the Greek phrase is the same which occurs here.

13. *All the saints salute you.* Or, *greet* you. That is, all the Christians with whom Paul was then immediately associated. Equivalent to "the churches of Christ salute you," Rom. xvi. 16.

14. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.* This is Paul's ordinary apostolic benediction. See note on Rom. xvi. 20. Here, as in that place, he may be understood to invoke all spiritual blessings which flow from the fountain of grace through Jesus Christ; perhaps with a special reference to the reformation, love, and peace, to which he has just exhorted his brethren. ¶ *And the love of God.* The benedic-

Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be with you all.* Amen.

¶ The second *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.

tion is expanded here, and given in its most perfect form. God's love is unchangeable, and always embraces his offspring. The desire here expressed is that it may be fully realized, and that the blessings which flow from it, such as pardon, sanctification, comfort, joy, and peace, may be enjoyed through faith, even in the present life. 1 Tim. iv. 10. ¶ *And the communion of the Holy Ghost.* The joint-participation of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. Some of these are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," Gal. v. 22, 23, besides the miraculous gifts conferred in apostolic times. All these are invoked by the apostle. ¶ *Be with you all.* With all without exception. He desired that even those who were now his enemies and rebellious against the truth, might be converted and become partakers of spiritual blessings. ¶ *Amen.* This word is rejected by most critics, as an addition by some early copyist. The subscription to the Epistle is generally considered to be true in itself, but not to have been written by the apostle.

I cannot better close these notes on the Epistle generally and the benediction in particular, than in the language of *Stanley*: "The love of God for

man is brought home to the human race by the favor and goodness of Christ. The joint-participation in the pure and holy spirit, which that love sheds abroad in our hearts, is the great gift which Christ left to the whole body of believers. In other words, the favor, the benediction of Christ, with which the apostle always parts from his readers, is, he now finally assures them, the nearest approach from God to man, the nearest approach of man to God. It is no less, on the one hand, than the expression of the Creator's affection for his creatures; it is no less, on the other, than the union of the hearts and spirits of men with the heart and spirit of God. And this blessing he invokes, not on a few individuals, or on any one section of the Corinthian church, but expressly on every portion and every individual of those with whom, throughout these two Epistles, he had so earnestly and so variously argued and contended. As in the first, so in the second Epistle, but still more emphatically, as being here his very last words, his prayer was, that this happiness might be with them all." And in this he manifested the spirit of our Lord, who prayed for all, and "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 6.

END OF II. CORINTHIANS.





